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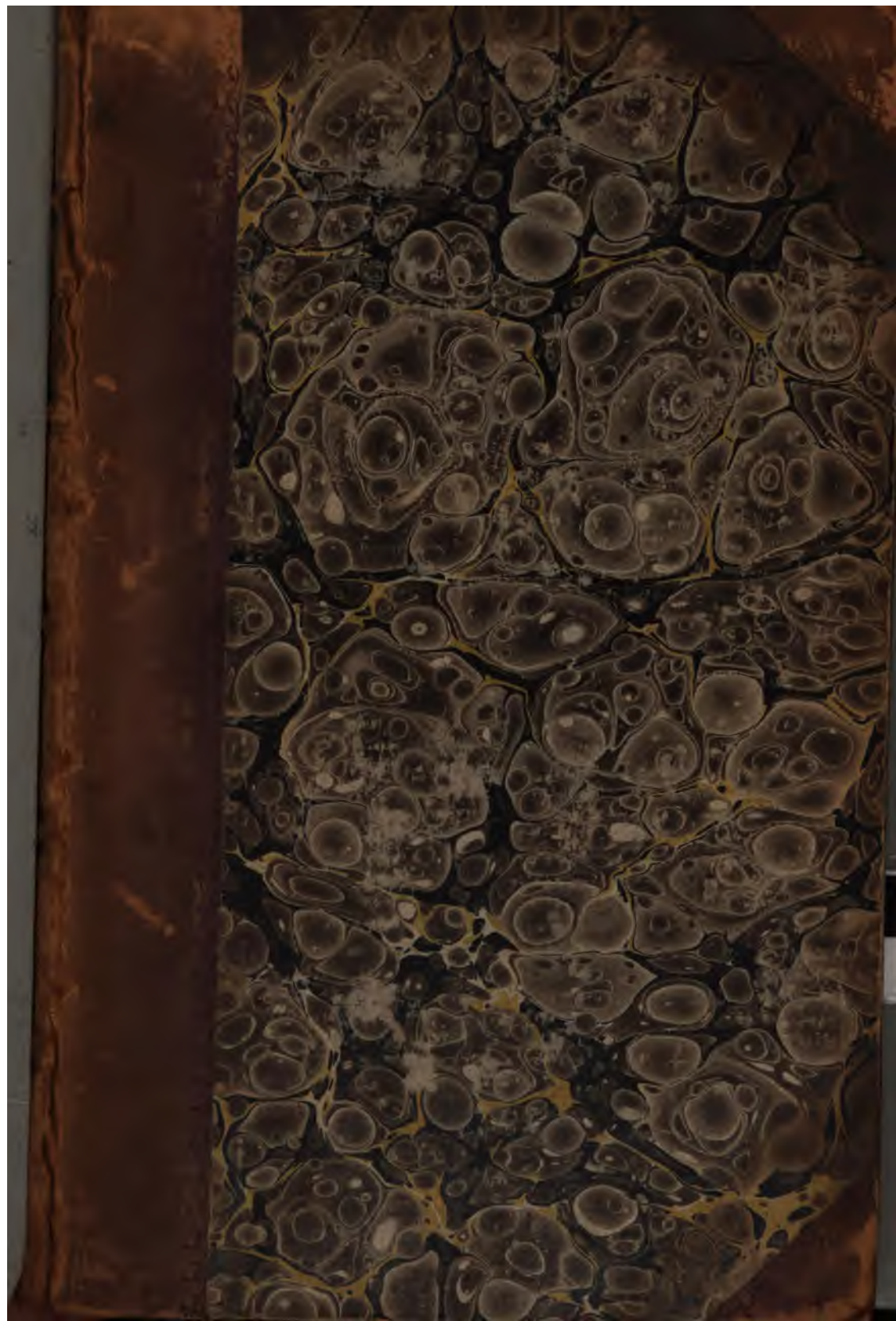
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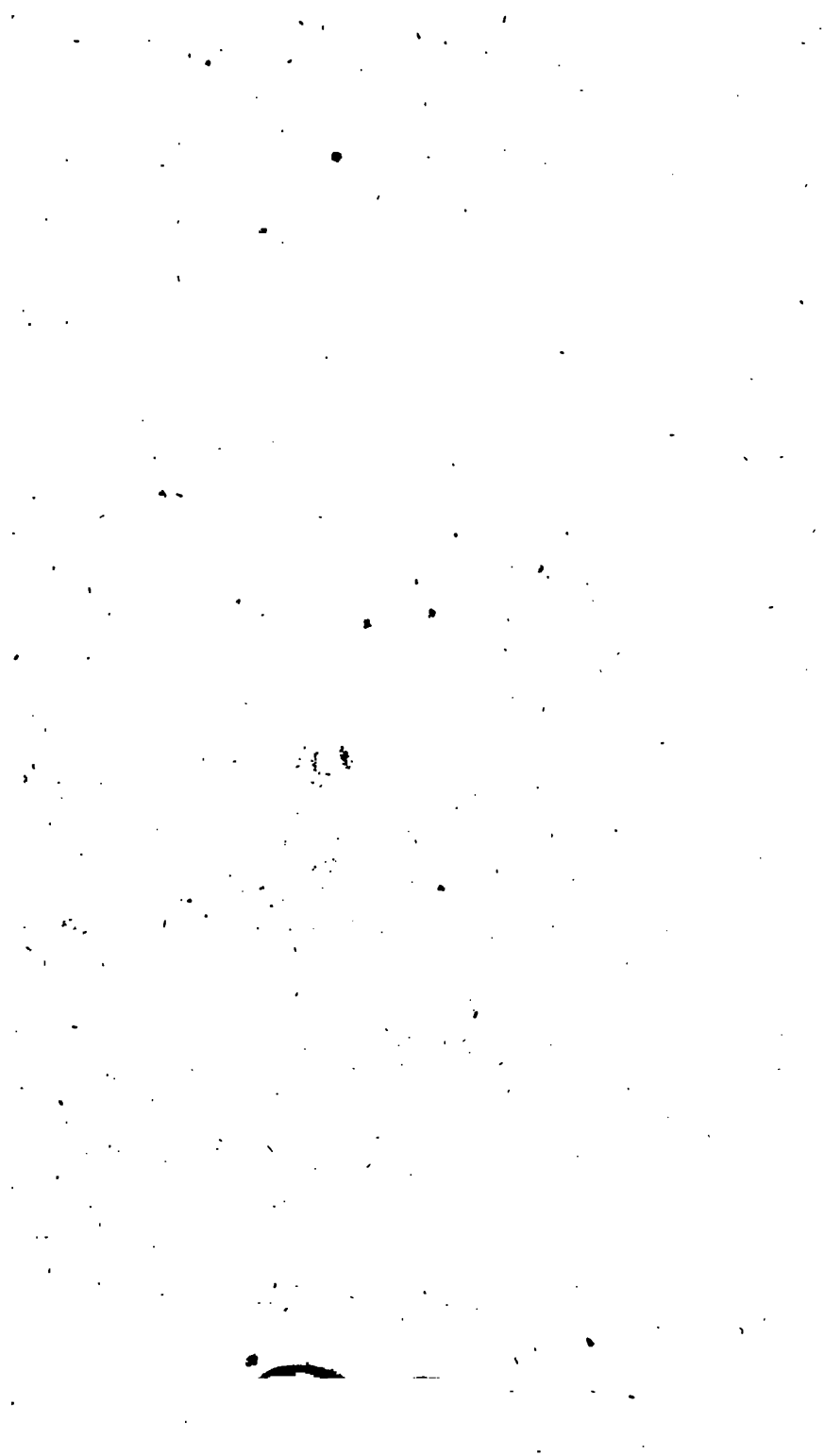
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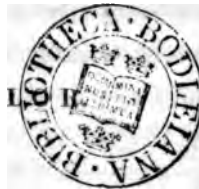
PROCESS
OF
HISTORICAL PROOF;

EXEMPLIFIED AND EXPLAINED:

WITH

OBSERVATIONS ON THE PECULIAR POINTS OF THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE.

BY ISAAC TAYLOR



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P R E F A C E.

THERE are some subjects that belong by equal right to different and independent departments of knowledge. The Christian Evidences are of this kind; for while they form an inseparable branch of theological study, they are manifestly included also in the province of general history. He, therefore, who devotes himself to the knowledge of whatever relates to the past condition of mankind, is free to examine these evidences—nay, he is bound to examine them—apart from their connection with religion.

This is the ground on which I present the following pages to the reader. After exemplifying, in a signal instance, the ordinary process of historical proof, I have endeavoured to suggest

hints for analyzing, with fairness and freedom, the Christian Records—viewing them merely as the materials of history.

As in the course of my argument I have ventured, once and again, to express dissatisfaction at the mode in which, often, the Christian evidences are defended, it is proper I should distinctly avow my opinion that the question has been injuriously confined to too narrow a ground; that too little use has been made of the common principles of historical investigation;—that some unwarrantable concessions, subversive of all evidence, have been granted to the absurd demands of infidels;—that a capital axiom has been tacitly admitted into the discussion which has no foundation in reason;—that the *peculiarities* of the Christian evidence have been suffered, unnecessarily, to clog the argument; and finally, that a misplaced moderation or modesty on the part of the advocates of religion has obscured the clearest conclusions with a mist of uncertainty. To this avowal I have only to subjoin my hearty wish that some writer, competent to the task, may presently appear to offer such a statement of this

momentous question, as shall be liable to none of these objections.

In choosing a classical work, by means of which to exemplify the process of proof, I felt no difficulty in selecting that of Herodotus. For as this author is the most ancient of all the profane historians that are extant, his writings afford the greatest scope for exhibiting, at once, the *parts* and the *strength* of the chain of evidence. And besides, Herodotus, more than any other respectable historian of antiquity, has shared the fate of the Sacred Writings, in sustaining, during a long succession of ages, the attacks of witless or malignant scepticism. It is only of late that his merits and substantial authenticity have been rescued from the misrepresentations of ignorance and presumption. This recent vindication of Herodotus has taken place, partly in consequence of the more diligent, modest, and intelligent researches of modern scholars; and partly it has arisen from the discoveries of late travellers, who, in passing over the countries described by the father of history three-and-twenty centuries ago, have, in a multiplicity of instances, verified his state-

ments. Although therefore the line of argument might have seemed somewhat more direct and simple, if Thucydides for example, whose authenticity has never been questioned, rather than Herodotus, had formed the subject of exemplification, the illustration would have been less appropriate to the special purpose for which it is adduced.

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CHAPTER I.

NATURE AND UTILITY OF THE INVESTIGATION ABOUT TO BE PURSUED.

THAT the specific design of the following pages may be fully understood, the reader must imagine for a moment that the entire mass of Greek and Roman literature had perished during the middle ages; and that the Scriptures, like the works of Hesychius, and some other authors, had come down to modern times in a single copy;—or only in one of the ancient versions. This supposition is far from being extravagant; for there were several periods when the entire destruction of ancient books seemed more probable than their preservation.

If the Greek Empire had been overthrown by the Asiatic hordes a few centuries earlier than actually happened;—if the incursions of the northern Barbarians upon the southern nations had been somewhat more simultaneous, and more extensively desolating than they were;—if some of the leaders of these invasions had not previously

imbibed a degree of respect for learning and religion;—if Christianity had been extinguished even for a single century;—or if the system of monachism had not arisen and been maintained in the church;—on any of these suppositions, so far as we may calculate upon common probabilities, not a fragment, or scarcely a fragment of ancient literature would have descended to modern times.

If the Scriptures alone had survived the general destruction of books;—and they had in fact, a much higher chance of preservation than any other writings;—and if, destitute of all external evidence, they had been anew sent forth among the nations, they might well, on the strength of their intrinsic claims, have been accepted by mankind, as in fact they are now accepted by thousands, who, utterly ignorant of the historical grounds of belief, joyfully receive from them “a hope full of immortality.”

But instead of this solitary and unauthenticated transmission of the Scriptures which we have here supposed, they have in fact been attended in their descent from distant times by a vast and various assemblage of ancient books—all passing by the same modes from age to age—all subjected to the same perils—all demanding therefore the same critical treatment, and all claiming the benefit of the same laws of evidence when severally called upon to vindicate their claims to a place among genuine and authentic works. Nor can

any reason be imagined—at least any good reason, why some one of these authors should be excepted from the operation of the principles that are applied to all others. No notion previously formed of what is probable or possible, can be allowed to have the smallest influence in obstructing the course of those deductions which are made from particular facts, on principles acknowledged to be sound:—a notion may weigh against a notion;—or one hypothesis may be left to contend with another; but an hypothesis can never be permitted, even in the slightest degree, to counterbalance either actual facts, or direct inferences from such facts.

This preference of facts, and of direct inductions to hypotheses, however ingenious or specious they may be, is the great law of modern science, which none but dreamers attempt to violate. Now the rules of criticism, and the laws of historical evidence are as much *matters of science*, as any other rules or laws derived by careful induction from a mass of facts. If the facts are few from which such deductions are made, the rules must be incomplete, and liable to much uncertainty; but if they are numerous, and various, so as to include instances of all kinds, then the induction of principles is freed from anomalies, and the rules become so well defined that they may be safely and readily applied to every case that presents itself for adjudication..

But so great a number of ancient books has reached modern times, their intrinsic characters are so much diversified, and the particular circumstances attending their transmission are so various, that a wide field is opened whence to collect general principles, under the guidance of which a satisfactory opinion may be formed in every instance that demands examination. No case of forgery, or of interpolation, or of fabrication, or of prejudice, or of delusion, can present itself that may not be compared with many kindred examples; and from such comparisons, made without fear or favour, the true nature of the case will almost certainly be made apparent; for though we might be perplexed in forming an opinion in the solitary instance, the multitude of instances sheds upon each a focus of light.

Every one knows how differently he feels when called to form an opinion, and give a decision upon a subject that falls within the range of his common knowledge; or upon one relative to which he has no previous experience. In the latter case, though the facts may be intelligible, and the evidence ample and conclusive, and such as he knows not how to resist, yet, feeling himself on strange ground, and his convictions wanting the corroboration of experience, he can hardly dismiss a lurking distrust even of his senses and clearest perceptions.—Ignorance is ever the mother of fear. But to one who has large experience among facts

of the same class, who has had repeated opportunities of verifying or of correcting his past decisions in similar cases, and of ascertaining the soundness of the principles by which his judgment has been guided ; and who is familiarly acquainted with the various exceptions, or seeming exceptions to which those principles are liable, gives with a prompt confidence, its due weight to every separate portion of the evidence before him. The facts though new in circumstance and form, are old in substance :—he recognizes at first sight each by its proper designation—is not imposed upon by specious colours ; nor does he, from a false caution, extend suspicions from things doubtful to things certain.

Now although those general principles that are deduced from an extensive acquaintance with ancient literature and history, will not avail to set every question at rest, or to make all facts equally certain ; they serve invariably and infallibly to distinguish the certain from the doubtful ; or to draw a broad line of separation, on the one side of which will be ranged such facts as cannot with any reasonable pretext, or without absurd suppositions be called in question ;—and on the other, such as may fairly and in good faith be made matter of controversy. Nothing is more important to the good management of common affairs, or to the successful prosecution of philosophical inquiries, or to the safe determination of theological

questions, than the establishment of this distinction;—a distinction to which strong minds resort and are safe, and in the neglect of which the feeble fall into endless perplexities.

No very laborious examination of ancient books is required in order to perceive that they may, on satisfactory grounds, be distributed into three classes;—the first including those works—and it is by far the greater number—the genuineness of which is in the most absolute sense indisputable. The second class, such as have a doubtful claim to authenticity, and which, unless some new evidence should be adduced, must always remain liable to controversy. The third class will comprehend those works which are manifestly spurious. A similar distribution may be made of the various narrations that fill the pages of historians; for of these some are incontrovertibly certain; others doubtful; and others certainly false. The obvious advantage of making this distinction, and of keeping it ever in view, is that it redeems writings and facts belonging to the first class, from that suspicion which may attach to them merely from their intermixture with those of the second class, and of the third.

It has in fact often been attempted to mingle and confound these three classes of writings and of facts; and the attempt has been made by persons of very opposite intentions; for example;—men of weak judgments and of a dogmatical and

over-weaning temper, have not seldom prided themselves upon taking under their protection certain works, or certain points of history, generally rejected as spurious or false by men of sound sense; and if they could not assert for such books or facts, an incontestable claim to respect, have, at least, endeavoured to foist them within the pale of probability; thus confounding the third class with the second; or sometimes they have laboured to claim a place in the first class, for what belongs only to the second. Such persons seem to be influenced by the feeling of the pleader, whose zeal as an advocate increases in proportion to the demerit of his client.

On the other hand, intellectual timidity, or a sinister intention, has induced some critics to act the part of the calumniator, whose practice it is to propagate the infection of slander by flinging the skirt of the guilty over the shoulders of the innocent. Because a work unquestionably genuine has by some accidental connexion become associated with others, palpably spurious, therefore it is to be loaded with groundless imputations; and without even a pretext for suspicion to fix upon, is to be amerced in its just claims upon our confidence. On this system of detraction, ancient books which stand by full right in the first class, are thrust down to the second, while such as may fairly pretend to a place in the second, are made to herd with the last. In all these pro-

ceedings the principles of criticism are disregarded, and common sense is abused.

ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY in matters of antiquity may result, either from an accumulation of various evidence, to such an amount that numerous deductions may be made from it without affecting the conclusion; or from some particular coincidence of proof, of that kind which admits of no opposite supposition. In most instances, where there is a great accumulation of evidence, there will be found among it some such special proofs.

A degree of doubt on points of antiquity may arise, either from a mere paucity of direct evidence, or from its indistinctness or ambiguity; or from some internal incongruity in the evidence; or, lastly, from a direct opposition of existing testimonies. In the two words DEFECT and CONTRARIETY, all the sources of doubt are summed up.

The absence of all direct and admissible evidence, together with manifest incongruities, are the circumstances which affix to a book the brand of spuriousness, or to a narrative of alledged facts, the stigma of falsehood. These cases of unquestionable spuriousness or falsification, as well as those to which some uncertainty attaches, serve by the comparisons they afford, an important purpose in arguments of this kind. Inasmuch, however, as a full exhibition of such instances involves statements somewhat recondite, or intricate, and therefore apt to create confusion of thought, and mis-

apprehensions, we purpose to keep them apart for the present, in order that a series of proofs, of a much simpler kind, may be left clear of all embarrassments.

Instead of taxing the attention of the reader, by placing before him a set of abstract principles of evidence, or of distracting his attention by adducing a multiplicity of instances, we propose to select a single instance, and to exhibit, link by link, the entire chain of proofs by means of which the ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY of events alledged to have taken place nearly five hundred years before the birth of Christ, may be satisfactorily established. We select the history of Herodotus, and the principal events of the Persian war, as affording fair samples of this species of reasoning, in the two departments of literary and historical proof. A brief account of the historian, and of his celebrated work, will properly introduce the series of facts presently to be brought forward. The reader will of course perceive, that this introductory account forms no part of the proposed argument.

CHAPTER II.

BRIEF ACCOUNT OF HERODOTUS, AND OF HIS
HISTORY.

EXCEPTING the sacred books of the Jews, and excepting also some doubtful and unimportant fragments of early historians, preserved in the works of later writers, the history ascribed to Herodotus is the most ancient of all the historical works that have descended to modern times. And as it is the most ancient, so also it is one of the most comprehensive, various, entertaining, and, on the whole, authentic and important of all the records of antiquity. If the nine books of Herodotus had perished, and with them all those passages in ancient authors which are directly quoted, or substantially derived from his work, our knowledge of the earlier portion of history would be extremely imperfect. We should also have wanted many graphic and accurate descriptions of countries, and of the character and usages of ancient nations, which serve to diffuse a general light over the pages of other writers. This work may therefore be considered as forming the foundation of all (profane) history ;—the author has indeed been

generally allowed to possess a just claim to the title of the Father of History.

Herodotus,* as the first sentence of his history declares, was born at Halicarnassus,† a maritime city, and the capital of Caria, in Asia Minor. He is said to have attained the fifty-third year of his age at the breaking out of the Peloponnesian war, which brings the time of his birth to the first year of the seventy-fourth Olympiad; or four years before the invasion of Greece by Xerxes, and B. C. 444. His father's name was Lyxes, his mother's Dryo.

The forms of government which prevailed in the Grecian colonies of Asia Minor, were less free than those of Greece itself; the Asiatic cities being for the most part ruled by governors who bore the title of tyrants, and whose power was scarcely at all subjected to the restraints of law. This kind of despotism was borne impatiently by many of these Greeks; especially by those among them to whom a liberal education had opened the literature of the mother country, inspiring them with that love of liberty, which so much distinguished the race. Such seems to have been the case with Herodotus, who, indignant at the insolence of Lygdamis, at that time tyrant of Halicarnassus, abandoned his country, and took refuge in the

* Suidas is the principal authority for the following particulars. ●

† Now Boodroom.

Isle of Samos, which, during a long period, was a place of resort for learned men, from the neighbouring continents. Here he studied the Ionic dialect, which he preferred to his native Doric; and here, probably, he formed the design of devoting himself to the composition of a great historical work.

• The writings of Hellanicus of Mitylene,* and of Charon, of Lampsacus, then lately published, perhaps served at once to awaken and to direct his ambition. Having formed this design, it appears—and his writings abundantly attest the fact, that he resolved to spare no labours that might tend to qualify him for the better execution of his task. He set out therefore on a course of extensive travels,† visiting Greece, and Epirus, Macedonia, Thrace, and the borders of Scythia;—probably making some excursions among the Nomadic tribes of central Asia. From the shores of the Euxine and the Caspian, he passed into Media and Persia, and visited Babylon. Thence he proceeded to Phœnicia; and having traversed Palestine, explored with the most assiduous attention, Upper and Lower Egypt: from Egypt he passed along the northern coast of Africa, as far, at least, as Cyrene, and probably further, for his description of the line of coast reaching from the mouths of the Nile to the Pillars of Hercules, is as particular and exact as that of those regions which he unquestionably

* See Note.

† See Note.

visited. The labours of Herodotus in collecting information, seem to have been comprehensive and indefatigable; and perhaps we may add, cautious. He examined all natural objects, computed the distances of places—conversed with persons of all classes—searched municipal records—inspected public monuments, and, finally, collated the accounts given him in one city, with those he received in another.

Having completed his course of travels, Herodotus returned to Samos, where he applied himself to the labour of combining the materials he had collected. But from these studies, he was presently diverted by the hope of delivering his native city from the oppressive rule of Lygdamis. Repairing therefore to Halicarnassus, he roused his countrymen, and actually succeeded in expelling the tyrant, and in establishing a popular form of government; but soon becoming obnoxious to a factious party of the citizens, he once more, and for ever, quitted his native country, and passed into Greece. The Greeks being at that time assembled for the celebration of the Olympic games, Herodotus availed himself of the occasion, to recite in public some portions of his history. These passages excited the admiration, and gained the lively applauses of the people, who are reported to have designated the nine books of the history by the names of the Nine Muses. This fact has, however, been disputed. On some subsequent

occasion Herodotus read his history before the Athenians, who, by a public decree, bestowed ten talents upon the author, as an expression of their approbation of the work.

Not long afterwards, Herodotus associated himself with a company of Athenians, who went out to form a colony at Thurium, in Italy; where, it is believed, he passed the remainder of his days; and where he seems to have employed himself in revising his history, and in making such additions to it as subsequent information might suggest. From the circumstance of his long residence at this place, the historian is often designated by ancient authors, as 'the Thurian.' Stephen of Byzantium reports that an inscription had been found at Thurium, declaring that "Herodotus, son of Lyxes, a Dorian by birth, but the most illustrious of the Ionian historians, was there interred." Marcellinus,* indeed affirms, that the tomb of Herodotus was to be seen at Athens; but the monument he mentions was probably a cenotaph, erected by the Athenians in honour of the historian, whose genius had consigned their glory to immortality.

At the time when Herodotus formed the design of compiling his history, the Greeks retained a vivid recollection of that great struggle which had issued in freeing them from the long impending

* In his Life of Thucydides.

fear of subjugation by the Persian power. This struggle, therefore, so arduous and so glorious, was chosen by him as the principal subject of his work. But to render the narrative of the Persian invasion at once more intelligible and more impressive than it could otherwise be, much preliminary matter is introduced. This introductory part of the work contains a condensed history of most of the nations of Asia and of Africa, so far as those continents were known to the ancients, together with descriptions, sometimes succinct, and sometimes very copious, of the geographical features and the natural productions of the countries he mentions; with accounts of the manners, governments, laws, arts, and public works of the people; interspersed with antiquarian dissertations on the origin of nations, and on the derivation of their languages, and their religions.

Though eminent for the artless simplicity of his style, this writer displays not a little skill in the combination of his materials. The opposition and contrast of topics, the mode of his transitions, and the graceful progression of the main story, attended by frequent digressions, all bearing some real relation to the principal subject, exhibit a kind of management not altogether unlike that which is perceptible in the Epics of Homer. To display to the best advantage the magnitude of the danger which the Greeks had averted on the fields of Marathon, of Platea, and of Mycale; at Arte-

misium, and at Salamis, it was necessary to give an ample account of the rise, conquests, and magnitude of the kingdom of Persia. But this required to be preceded by the history of the Lydian kingdom, the overthrow of which brought the Persians in contact with the Greeks, and so gave occasion to the war. The history commences, therefore, with an account of the kings of Sardis, and especially of Cræsus, the last of the Lydian monarchs. This point of time being attained, when the Persian power was first directly opposed to that of the Greeks, the history proceeds to narrate the successive conquests of the Persians in Asia and Africa, till at length Greece became the scene of action:—and it closes with the final expulsion of the Barbarians from the land of liberty.

CHAPTER III.

THE GREEK TEXT OF HERODOTUS EXTANT BEFORE THE INVENTION OF PRINTING.

A WORK consisting of materials so dissimilar, and those drawn from sources so various, must of course be expected to furnish instances of the

the probable, the improbable, the certain, and the doubtful, in every degree between mere fable, and genuine history. Our present purpose does not require us to discuss any of those points which may fairly be thought doubtful. Leaving such matters untouched, our business will be to exhibit the grounds on which the latter and principal portions of the history may be deemed unquestionably authentic. The first step, manifestly in this line of proof, must be to establish the antiquity and genuineness of the work.

Now the mention of a very few facts might suffice to carry this proof, in the most satisfactory manner, up to an age not remote from that of the supposed author; but in order that the argument may be displayed in all its details, we shall divide the mass of facts to be adduced into several portions, and in the first place prove—what it is in fact superfluous to prove; namely — That the Greek text of Herodotus, such as it now appears, was extant some time before the publication of the earliest printed editions.

Ostensible and tangible proof of what we here affirm, is afforded by the existence, at the present time, in several public libraries, of many manuscript copies of the Greek text, which by the date affixed to them, by the character of the writing, the appearance of the ink, and material, and by the traditionary history of some of them, are clearly attributable to different ages, from the tenth

century to the fifteenth.* But if it were possible to suppose that all these copies were derived from one, and that one a forgery of a late date, an examination and comparison of them, and a comparison of the manuscripts with the printed editions, will furnish several special demonstrations of the point affirmed.

In 1474, twenty-eight years before the appearance of the first edition of the Greek text, Laurentius Valla published at Venice a Latin translation of Herodotus, purporting to have been made from the Greek.† Now if, in comparing this translation with the Greek manuscripts still extant, it were asked, which is the *original*, the Latin or the Greek? no one acquainted with the structure of language could hesitate in declaring for the latter; for in the Latin (as in every translation) ellipses are supplied, exegetical and connective phrases are introduced; and what is still more decisive, there are many passages in the Greek, where an obvious and consistent sense is evidently misunderstood or perverted in the Latin; for Valla seems, from all his translations, to have been but imperfectly acquainted with the Greek language. In such instances the occasion and the progress of the translator's error may often be detected; by which means proof of the most incontestable kind is afforded of the fact supposed to be questioned,

* See Note.

† See Note.

namely, that the Greek is the *original*, and the Latin the translation. Again:—The Latin compared with the Greek is deficient in many entire paragraphs, and many single sentences. In the Greek these passages are one and entire with the context; but in the Latin, the hiatus is either abrupt and apparent, or is concealed by a connective sentence, evidently inserted as a link between the disjoined portions of the text. Now, when special evidence like this is presented, we need not lay stress upon the traditionary history of certain manuscripts, nor upon their apparent antiquity, nor upon the genuineness of the dates affixed to them; for, from the facts actually before us, we can draw only one inference. Without going further, therefore, we may conclude with absolute certainty, that several Greek manuscripts of Herodotus were in existence some time before the publication of the printed editions; and by consequence, the averments of the first editors are confirmed, who declare that they derived their text from manuscripts already known to the learned.

The Greek text of Herodotus was first printed by Minutius Aldus, at Venice, September, 1502. Copies of this beautiful and correct edition, “corrected by a collation of many manuscripts,”* are still extant:—it is distinguished by its retention of the forms of the Ionic dialect, a proof

* Preface quoted by Renouard.

that the editor followed a pure and ancient manuscript, for the Ionic forms are generally lost in those copies, the text of which has passed through many transcriptions. This edition, with corrections and notes, was reprinted at Basil, in 1541, and again in 1557, by Joachim Camerarius. In 1570 the Aldine text of Herodotus was printed at Paris, by Henry Stephens, who does not profess himself to have collated manuscripts. The title page declares that the books were "*ex vetustis exemplaribus recogniti*:" but in his second edition, Stephens confesses that up to that time he had not been able to procure an ancient copy by which to correct the text; he must, therefore, in the phrase just quoted, be understood to refer to the manuscripts consulted by Aldus. G. Jungerman, assuming the edition just mentioned as the basis of his own, in which however he made, without specification, many conjectural emendations, printed the Greek text at Frankfort, in 1608. This was the first edition in which the text was divided into sections, as it now appears. The London edition, dated 1679, and published under favour of the name of the learned Thomas Gale, was derived without acknowledgment from that of Jungerman. Hitherto the editions were only successive reprints of the Aldine text; and came, therefore, all from a single source; but in 1715, an edition of Herodotus was published at Leyden, under the care of J.

Gronovius, who collated the former editions with some manuscripts before unknown, or not examined. The Glasgow edition appeared in 1761; and two years later, that of Wesseling, printed at Amsterdam. Some quotations from this editor's preface* will give the general reader a good idea of the method of conducting these literary labours, and of the security afforded for the purity of the text of ancient authors. Several German and Dutch editions have appeared since that of Wesseling; the most esteemed are those of Borheck, Reiz, Schaefer, and Schweighaeuser.†

CHAPTER IV.

HERODOTUS QUOTED AND MENTIONED DURING
A THOUSAND YEARS, FROM A.D. 1150, TO
A.D. 150.

THE proper and the most conclusive proof of the antiquity and genuineness of ancient books is that which is derived from themselves by a collation of their mutual references and quotations. There is an independence in this kind of evidence, which renders it, when precise and copious, absolutely

* See Note.

† See Note.

infallible. It is not the evidence of witnesses, first schooled and cautioned, and then brought into court to do their best for the party by whom they are summoned. But it is the purely incidental testimony of unconnected persons, who, in the pursuit of their particular objects, gather up and present to us the facts we are in search of. Besides, these facts have a peculiarity which renders them eminently capable of furnishing precise and conclusive proof. A book is an aggregate of many thousand separable parts, each of which, both by the thought it contains, and by the choice and arrangement of the words possesses a perfect individuality, such as fits it for the purpose of defining or identifying the whole to which it belongs;—and if several of these definite parts are adduced, the identification is rendered more than complete. This kind of definition is moreover capable of being multiplied almost without end, for each writer who quotes a book, having probably a different object in view, selects a different set of quotations; yet all of them meeting in the same work. We are thus furnished with a complicated system of concentric lines, which intersect no where but in the book in question.

Then it is to be remembered, that each of these quoting writers stands himself as the centre of a similar system of references, so that the complication of proof becomes infinitely intricate, and therefore so much the more conclusive. It is again

involved, and so rendered secure, by the occurrence of double or treble quotations ; for example, Photius quotes Ctesias, quoting Herodotus. The proof of genuineness in the instance of a standard author, is by these means extended, attenuated, and involved in a degree to which no other species of evidence makes any approach.

It hardly needs to be said, that this high and absolute certainty, resulting from the complication as well as the number of testimonies, belongs only to works that are explicitly, and frequently quoted by succeeding writers. And yet this sort of proof is deemed, in its nature, so valid and satisfactory, that a very small portion of it is ordinarily admitted to be quite sufficient. If, for instance, a book is mentioned explicitly only by one or two writers of the next age, the evidence is allowed to decide the question of genuineness, unless there appear some positive reasons to justify suspicion. But with *questionable* matters we have not now to do.

It cannot be thought necessary to our argument to adduce separately, proof of the genuineness of the works about to be cited ; since they all possess an established character, resting upon evidence of the same kind as that which is here displayed in the case of Herodotus. To bring forward all this proof in each instance, would fill volumes.

We have seen that various manuscript copies of Herodotus, of which several are still preserved, were extant before the first printed editions appeared; and from a comparison of these manuscripts, as well as from the date which some of them bore, and from their seeming antiquity, it is evident that the work had then been in existence at least three hundred years: for these several manuscripts exhibit in their various readings those minute diversities which are always found to arise from repeated transcriptions made by copyists in different ages and countries; — some of these copyists being exact and skilful, others careless and ignorant. This proof of antiquity is more conclusive than that which arises from a mere traditionary history of a single manuscript or from a date affixed to a copy; for the date may be spurious, or the tradition may be unauthentic. But in the various readings we have before our eyes a species of decay, which time alone could produce.

We therefore assume it as certain, that the text of this author was extant at least as early as the 12th century. And if it is supposed that we cannot trace the history of these manuscripts higher than that time, then we turn to another species of evidence, namely—that arising from the quotations of a series of writers, extending upwards from the age in which the history of the manuscripts merges in obscurity, to the very age of the author.

The evidence to be adduced we divide into two

portions, in the first place proving that the history of Herodotus was known to the learned during a period of a thousand years, from A. D. 1150, to A. D. 150. We proceed retrogressively, commencing with

EUSTATHIUS,* archbishop of Thessalonica, who flourished in the latter part of the 12th century. His commentaries upon the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer, contain many references to Herodotus, more or less full and precise. Among these the following afford sufficient proof of the point we have to establish; for they leave no room to doubt that the history of Herodotus, as now extant, was in the hands of this learned prelate.—Comment. Iliad, Book I. Section 4. ‘But Herodotus seems to resemble Pherecydes and Hecataeus, who (in writing history) threw aside the adornments of the poetic style.’—Il. II. Sect. 79. ‘Herodotus (Erato 74) says that Nonacris is a city of Arcadia where the waters of Styx arise, &c.’—Il. IV. Sect. 71. ‘Herodotus, that sweet writer of the Ionic.’ Sect. 42. Eustathius cites our author (Clio 195)

* In a few instances I have been obliged to rely upon the accuracy of the editors and translators of Herodotus.—The last three quotations from Eustathius are borrowed from the notes to Clarke’s Homer, and from Larcher. The extracts from Marcellinus are taken from the Life of Thucydides by that writer, usually prefixed to the editions of the historian. The quotation from Hermogenes is translated from Larcher, as well as that from Scymnus of Chios.

to illustrate the meaning of the word *mitra*—girdle or turban. Sect. 73, on the word *phalanx*. Sect. 95, he quotes (Melpomene 95) a sentence in which Herodotus calls Pythagoras 'a man eminent among the Greeks for his intelligence.'—Sect. 96, he quotes a passage (Euterpe 77) relative to the Egyptian bread.—Comment. *Odyssey* IV. line 84. 'Menelaus certainly visited those other Ethiopians whom Herodotus (Euterpe 39) describes as bordering upon the Egyptians.'—*Odys.* XII. l. 127, he alludes to the account given by our author (Calliope 93) of the sheep sacred to the sun in Apollonia. — Comment. Dionysius Periegetes, verse 423, Eustathius quotes Herodotus, (Clio 56) in proof that the Athenians were of Pelasgian origin.

SUIDAS, a learned Byzantine monk is believed to have flourished at the close of the 11th century. His *Lexicon*, as we have already mentioned (page 11) contains a brief Life of Herodotus; besides which there occur under other words, many (not fewer than 200) incidental references to different parts of the history. They are for the most part citations of a very exact kind, adduced in illustration of the meaning or orthography of words.

PHOTIUS, the learned but ambitious patriarch of Constantinople, belongs to the 9th century. This writer has preserved the only portions that remain of the Persian and Indian history of Ctesias, who, as we shall presently see, gives a nearly

contemporary testimony to Herodotus. The Myriobiblon of Photius consists of notices and abridgements of 280 works which he had read, and affords therefore much information available in determining questions of literary antiquity. Many works were extant in the 9th century—at Constantinople especially—which disappeared in the following age; and Photius, with free access to the extensive libraries of that city, wanted no advantage which might fit him for the task of reviewing the literature of the preceding ages. When, therefore, he quotes and describes a work, and speaks of it confidently as having been long known in the world, and generally received as a genuine production of the author whose name it bears, his evidence carries up the proof to a still more remote age; for no spurious work, recently produced, could have been so mentioned by a critic of great learning and sound judgment. In the Myriobiblon, besides some incidental references, as in Art. 72 and 90, we find the following account (Art. 60) of Herodotus. ‘We have perused the nine historical books of Herodotus, bearing the names of the Nine Muses. This writer uses the Ionic dialect, as Thucydides employs the Attic. He admits fabulous accounts, and frequent digressions, which give a pleasing flow to the narrative; though indeed this manner of writing violates the strict proprieties of the historical style, in which the accuracy of truth

- ought not to be obscured by any mixtures of fable, nor the end proposed by the author to be long lost sight of. He begins the history with the reign of Cyrus—the first of the Persian kings—narrating his birth, education, elevation, and rule; and he brings it down as far as the reign of Xerxes—his expedition against the Athenians, and his flight. Xerxes was indeed the fourth king from Cyrus—Cambyses being the second, and Darius the third; for Smerdes the Magus is not to be reckoned in the line of kings, inasmuch as he was an usurper who possessed himself of the throne by fraud. With Xerxes, the son and successor of Darius, the history closes, nor indeed is it carried to the end of his reign; for Herodotus himself flourished in those very times, as Diodorus the Sicilian, and others relate, who mention the story that Thucydides, while yet a youth, was present with his father when Herodotus read his history in public, on which occasion he burst into tears; which being observed by Herodotus, the historian, turned to the father and said, ‘O Olorus, what a son have you, who thus burns with a passion for learning!’

This concise description of the work is abundantly sufficient to prove the existence of the text now extant in the age of Photius, whose testimony establishes also the fact that it had then been long known and reputed as a genuine production of Herodotus, while the exceptions made against

certain fabulous digressions contain an explicit acknowledgment that the history was generally received as authentic.

STEPHEN of Byzantium, author of a geographical and historical Lexicon, flourished in the middle of the 6th century. He frequently refers to Herodotus. Art. *Thurium*, he quotes an inscription above-mentioned (page 14) and under the following words references to our author occur. '*Abarnum*, a city, region, and promontory of Pariana, which Herodotus, in his 4th book (Melpom. 36.) says is called *Abaris*.' '*Arisbe*. Herodotus and Jason, call it *Arisba*.' (Clio 151.) '*Archandropolis*—a city of Egypt, according to Herodotus in his 2d book' (Euterpe 97.) '*Assa* a city near Mount Atho, mentioned by Herodotus, in his 7th book.' (Polymnia 122.) '*Thalamaneai*, a nation subject to the Persians; Herodotus.' (Thalia 93, 117.) '*Inyctum*, a city of Sicily, called by Herodotus (Errato 23.) *Inyctus*.' Herodotus appears to have been one of the principal authorities of Stephanus.

MARCELLINUS* a critic of the sixth century, in his Life of Thucydides, mentions Herodotus descriptively, and compares him on many points with his rival. Omitting many less direct allusions, the following may be mentioned. He com-

* Not the same as Ammianus Marcellinus the Roman historian.

mends the impartiality of Thucydides, who did not allow his personal wrongs to give any colouring to his narrative of facts—a degree of magnanimity, uncommon, he says, among historians—‘For even Herodotus, having been slighted by the Corinthians, affirms that they fled from the engagement at Salamis.’ Describing the lofty style of Thucydides, he compares it with that of Herodotus, which he says, is ‘neither lofty like that of the Attic historian, nor elegant like that of Xenophon.’ On the ground of authenticity also, he compares the two historians, giving the advantage in this respect to the younger, while he charges the former with admitting marvellous tales, citing as an example the story of Arion and the dolphin, (Clio 23, 24) and towards the close he repeats the incident already-mentioned, said to have taken place when Herodotus read his history in public.

PROCOPIUS the historian of the reign of Justinian wrote about the middle of the sixth century: he cites Herodotus in precise terms—‘Now Herodotus the Halicarnassian, in the fourth book of his history (Melpomene 42—45) says that the earth, though distributed into three portions—Africa, Asia, and Europe, is one; and that the Egyptian Nile flows between Africa and Asia, &c.’ Gothic Wars, B. IV.

STOBÆUS lived a century earlier than the last-named writer. In illustration of various ethical

topics, he collects the sentiments of a multitude of authors, and among the number of Herodotus. Short sentences from the historian are adduced in the following places :—Serm. X. of Injustice and Avarice. Serm. XX. of Anger. Serm. XXIII. of Self-Love. Serm. XLI. of the State. Serm. LXXII. Precepts of Married Life. As a fair specimen of the *exactness* of these quotations, the reader may compare the long extract from (Clio 30) containing the speech of Solon to Cræsus. —Serm. CIII. on the Instability of Human Affairs.

The Emperor JULIAN makes several allusions to our author ;—as in his first oration in praise of Constantine, ‘Cyrus was called the father, Cambyses the lord of his people.’ (Thalia 89.) In the exordium of his Epistle to the Athenian people, several distinct allusions to the history of the Persian invasion occur ; and in the Misopogon the story of Solon and Cræsus, related by Herodotus (Clio 30) is distinctly mentioned. In a list of the Greek authors (Epist. XLII.) Herodotus is included. And in an Epistle not now extant, but quoted by Suidas ; (Art. *Herodotus*) the apostate, as he is there called, cites the historian as ‘the Thurian writer of history.’

HESYCHIUS the Lexicographer, lived in the third century : he makes several quotations from our author. — ‘*Agathoergoi*—persons discharged from the cavalry of Sparta—five every year, as

Herodotus relates.' (Clio 67.) '*Basilees*—Judges; according to Herodotus, the avengers of wrong.' '*Zeira*, a zone, according to Herodotus. (Polym. 69.) '*Canamis*,' (Melpom. 74.) '*Tiara*, the bonnet of the Persians, according to Herodotus.' (Polym. 61.) '*Zalmoxis*—the account given of the Getæ, (Melpom. 93, 94) quoted at length.

ATHENÆUS, a critic of the second century, quotes our author in the following among other instances. B. II. c. 6. 'Herodotus in his first book (Clio 188) writes that the Persian kings drink no water except that which is brought from the Choaspian spring at Susa, which is carried for their use wherever they travel,' &c. B. IV. c. 10. 'Herodotus (Clio 133) comparing the Grecian entertainments with those of the Persians, relates that the latter pay a peculiar regard to their natal day.'—In the same chapter—'Herodotus in his seventh book, says that those Greeks who entertained Xerxes on his way, were reduced to such distress, that many of them left their homes.'—See also c. 12. of the same book. B. V. c. 13—B. VI. c. 6—17. 'Herodotus relates (Euterpe 173, 174) that Amasis, king of Egypt, was accustomed to jest very freely with his guests.'

LONGINUS, the celebrated secretary of queen Zenobia, quotes our author several times in his treatise on the sublime. Sect. 6—13. 'Was Herodotus alone an imitator of Homer?'—22, the address of Dionysius to the Phocæans is quoted,

‘Our affairs Ionians! have reached a crisis—we must be free or slaves,’ &c.—26, he quotes with high commendation a passage, in which our author describes the course between Elephantine and Meroe. (Euterpe 29)—28, a quotation from Clio, 105.—31. The story of Cleomenes (Terpsicore 41, *et seq.*) is quoted. ‘Cleomenes devoured his own flesh.’ &c.

DIODEGENES LAERTIUS, author of the *Lives of the Philosophers*, brings the line of testimonies up to the time mentioned at the head of this chapter: he makes the following references to our author. *Life of Thales* he refers to the assertions of Herodotus relative to the Magi (Clio 101) and to Xerxes, whom he affirms to have lanced darts at the sun, and to have thrown fetters into the sea. *Life of Pythagoras*. A passage is quoted relative to Zamolxis, who was worshipped by the Getæ. (Melpomene 94.)

It is obvious that if the testimonies to be adduced in the next chapter are full and conclusive, they will, in point of argument, supercede those which have been already brought forward; for if it can be satisfactorily proved that the now existing text of Herodotus was known more than two thousand years ago, it cannot be necessary to prove that it was extant at any intermediate period. Nevertheless the above-cited authorities do not merely serve the purpose of completing our chain of evidence, but they prove that the

work, far from having been in any age lost sight of, was always familiarly known to scholars. We may therefore feel assured that copies were to be found in most libraries—that the work was frequently transcribed, and that (as the existing manuscripts indicate) we are not dependent upon the accuracy of one or two copyists only, for the integrity of the text.

CHAPTER V.

HERODOTUS MENTIONED AND QUOTED, FROM
A.D. 150, TO HIS OWN TIMES.

A period of six or seven hundred years, ending in the second century of the Christian era, includes the brightest times both of Grecian and of Roman literature. Evidence of the most conclusive kind on questions of literary history may therefore be collected in abundance from the writers of those ages. Innumerable quotations from all the principal authors are found on the pages of almost every prose writer whose works have descended to modern times. The critics and historians especially, furnish abundantly the evidence we

are in search of. We begin this second series with

PAUSANIAS, who in his historical description of Greece, has frequent occasion to cite the authority of Herodotus. Of these citations the following may be mentioned : Book I. 33. In a digression relating to the Ethiopians, he quotes from Euterpe 32, and Melpomene 172 : ‘ For the Nasimones, whom Herodotus considers as the same as the Atlantics, and who are said to know the measure of the earth, are called by the Libyans, dwelling in the extreme parts of Libya, near Mount Atlas—Loxi,’ &c. Book I. 43. ‘ Agreeably to this Herodotus (Melpomene 103) tells us that in Scythia shipwrecked persons sacrifice bulls to a virgin, called by them Iphigenia, the daughter of Agamemnon.’* Book II. 16. the story of Io is referred to from Clio, 1, 5. Chap. 20 he quotes from Herodotus a prediction of the Delphic oracle ; and Chap. 30, he authenticates a story told by our author (Terpsicore 82) ‘ these particulars as they are accurately related by Herodotus it would

* This is a careless quotation : — the passage evidently alluded to is as follows—“ Among these (Scythian tribes) the *Taurians* observe the following customs—They sacrifice to a virgin shipwrecked persons, and such Greeks as fall into their hands. . . . The divinity to whom these sacrifices are made is said by the Taurians to be Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon.” The word *Taῖροι*, catching the eye of Pausanias in making a hasty reference, occasioned his mistake.

be superfluous for me to repeat.' Book III. 2. he refers to the orthography of a name (Clio 65) 'and Herodotus in his history of Cræsus informs us that this Labotas was under the guardianship of Lycurgus, who gave laws to the Lacedæmonians; but he calls him *Leobotas*,' &c. Thus in fact the name now stands in the Greek text:—minute correspondencies of this kind vouch for the correct transmission of ancient books. Chap. 25, he affirms that at Tænarus was to be seen 'Arion the harper, sitting on a dolphin. And the particulars respecting Arion and the dolphin Herodotus relates (Clio 24) as what he himself heard in his account of the Lydian affairs.' Book X. 32, 'As to the name of the city, I know that Herodotus (Urania 32) in that part of his history in which he gives an account of the irruption of the Persians into Greece, differs from what is asserted in the oracles of Bacis,' &c. The next chapter contains references of a similar kind.

LUCIAN of Samosata devotes some pages to Herodotus, whose style he characterises and commends; and he relates particularly the mode adopted by the historian for making his work known to the Greeks, 'so that wherever he appeared all might say, that is Herodotus who wrote the history of the Persian war in the Ionian dialect, and who so gloriously chanted our victories.'—Tooke's *Lucian*, vol. i. p. 765.

HERMOGENES, a rhetorician and the contem-

porary of Lucian, gives the following description of the historian's style: 'The diction of Herodotus is pure, easy, and perspicuous. Whenever he introduces fables he employs a poetic style. His thoughts are just, his language graceful and noble. —No one excels him in the art of describing after the manner of the poets, the manners and characters of his different personages. In many places he attains greatness of style, of which the conversation between Xerxes and Artabanus is an example.' (Hermog. de Formis Orationum, lib. 11. p. 147. ed. Aldi.) quoted by Larcher. :

AULUS GELLIUS, a miscellaneous writer, abounds with references to authors of every class. In his Attic Nights, Herodotus is frequently mentioned, as for example:—Book XVI. c. 19, he quotes at length the story of Arion, (Clio 23.) Book XVII. 8. 'Yet Herodotus the historian affirms (Melpom. 28) contrary to the opinion of almost all, that the Bosphorus or Cimmerian Sea is liable to be frozen.' Book XIII. c. 7. contains a verbal quotation from Thalia. 108, relative to the lioness, and Book XVI. 11. another on the fable of the Psyllians; (Melpom. 173.)

The evidence of PLUTARCH is sufficiently ample and conclusive to bear alone the whole burden of our argument. The writings of Plutarch having in every age enjoyed the highest reputation, have descended to modern times abundantly authenticated:—among them there is a small treatise

entitled 'Of the Malignity of Herodotus,' the history of which is as follows:—The historian in his account of the Persian invasion affirms the conduct of the Bœotians on various occasions to have been in the last degree traitorous and pusillanimous. Now Plutarch was a Bœotian, and he felt so keenly the perpetual infamy attached by Herodotus to his countrymen, that, with the hope of wiping out the stain, he endeavoured if possible, to destroy the reputation of our author, by advancing against him a heavy charge of a malignant falsification of facts throughout his history. To effect his object he reviews the entire work, bringing to bear upon every assailable point the utmost efforts of his critical acuteness, and all the stores of his universal learning. The specific charges advanced against Herodotus in this treatise, must, to a modern reader, appear for the most part, extremely frivolous. So far as they may seem to be more serious, they have been fully refuted by several critics:—See the prefaces of Camerarius and of H. Stephens, and especially the Memoir of the Abbé Geinoz, reprinted by Larcher, from the Memoirs of the Academy of Belles Letters.—Larcher's Herodotus, vol. vi.* But our business at present with Plutarch's treatise is to derive from it a complete proof of the genuineness and general authenticity of the work which is the subject of our argument. In the

* See Note.

first place then this treatise, by its many and exact references to all parts of the history, proves beyond a doubt that the Greek text now extant, is substantially the same as that read by Plutarch in the time of Trajan.* In the second place, Plutarch's tacit acknowledgment of the work as the genuine production of Herodotus, may be taken as affording alone a sufficient proof of that fact;—for if it had been at all questionable—if any obscurity had rested upon its traditionary history, Plutarch, whose learning was profound and extensive, could not have been ignorant of such grounds of doubt; nor would he have failed to take the short course of denying at once the authenticity of the book. The five hundred years which intervened between the times of Herodotus and of Plutarch, were ages of uninterrupted and widely diffused intelligence and erudition;—incomparably more so than the last five hundred years of European history: and Plutarch had vastly more ample means of ascertaining the genuineness of the history attributed to Herodotus, than a critic of the present day possesses in judging of the genuineness of Froissart or Abulfeda. In the third place this small treatise yields an implicit testimony in support of the general truth of the history itself; for in leaving untouched all the main parts of the story, and in fixing his

* See Note.

criticisms upon minor facts, and upon the mere colouring given to the narrative, Plutarch virtually acknowledges that the principal facts are unquestionable. Any one who peruses the refutation above-mentioned, of this treatise on the malignity of Herodotus will grant that Plutarch has in fact, on the whole, rather established the authenticity of the history against which he levels his critical weapons, than succeeded in destroying its credit.

JOSEPHUS quotes and corrects Herodotus:—Jewish Antiquities Book VIII. 4; and in his reply to Apion mentions him descriptively more than once—Book I. where he enumerates the Greek historians: a few pages further he notices the remarkable fact that ‘neither Herodotus nor Thucydides nor any of their contemporaries make the slightest mention of the Romans.’ Presently afterwards he quotes Manetho in opposition to Herodotus, in his account of Egyptian history: and some pages further, he makes an exact quotation from Euterpe 104, on the subject of circumcision.

QUINTILIAN, Book I. Sect. 1, compares Herodotus with Thucydides: ‘Herodotus, sweet, bland, and copious.’ IX. 4, ‘In Herodotus, as I think, there is always a gentle flow of language.’ X. 1, ‘Nor need Herodotus scorn to be conjoined with Livy.’

STRABO, the most learned, exact, and intelligent of the ancient geographers, very frequently

cites our author, upon whose statements he makes some severe criticisms; yet without impugning the general authenticity of the history. Book XIV. Art. *Halicarnassus*. 'Among the illustrious men born at this place is Herodotus, the historian, who is also called the Thurian, because he joined himself to a colony at that place.' Book I. 'It was not improperly said by Herodotus (Euterpe 5) that the whole of Egypt, at least the Delta, was a gift of the river.' Book II. Strabo refers to the account given (Melpom. 43) of the voyage round Africa, attempted by the order of Darius. Book VII. he refers to Melpomene 76. 120. and Book X. he quotes the authority of Herodotus, who affirms that at Memphis in Egypt there was a temple of Neptune (Thalia 37.)

The last named writer brings our series of testimonies to the commencement of the Christian era. In passing up the stream of time we meet next with

DIONYSIUS, the countryman of Herodotus, and author of the 'Roman Antiquities,' and of several critical treatises. In one of these, entitled 'The Judgment of Ancient Writers,' and in another, addressed to Cn. Pompey, Dionysius gives a minute account of the style, method, and comparative merits of our author. In the book on Composition, he makes a long and literal quotation from Clio 8—12. In the character of Thucydides, he thus speaks of Herodotus:

— ‘Herodotus the Halicarnassian, who survived to the time of the Peloponnesian war, though born a little before the Persian war, raised the style of writing history: nor was it the history of one city or nation only that he composed, but included in his work the many and various affairs both of Europe and Asia. For beginning with the Lydian kingdom, he continues to the Persian war—relates whatever was performed by the Greeks and Barbarians during a period of 240 years—selecting whatever was most worthy of record, and connecting them in a single history; at the same time gracing his work with excellencies that had been neglected by his predecessors.’ Several descriptive commendations of a similar kind might be adduced from the critical writings of this author.

Contemporary with Dionysius, though a few years his senior, was DIODORUS the Sicilian. This learned and laborious historian passes over much of the same ground with Herodotus, to whom he makes several allusions. Book I. p. 25,* in discussing the question relative to the inundations of the Nile, he states and controverts the opinion advanced by Herodotus on that subject (Euterpe 24.) Further on, p. 44, he rejects as fabulous the accounts given by Herodotus and others of the remote history of Egypt, and pro-

* Rhodoman's Diod.

fesses to follow the public records of the Egyptian priests; yet he had before, p. 23, eulogised our author as a writer 'without a rival, indefatigable in his researches, and extensively learned in history.' Book II. p. 83, Diodorus states the various opinions of writers relative to the Median empire, and among these, of Herodotus: 'Now Herodotus, who lived in the time of Xerxes, affirms (Clio 95) that the Assyrians had governed Asia during a period of 500 years before it was subjugated by the Medes.'

Our author was known to the Roman writers. CORNELIUS NEPOS evidently follows him in some passages, though he professes to adhere chiefly to the authority of Theopompus, Thucydides, and Xenophon. CICERO bestows upon him high commendation in several places, declaring that 'so far as his knowledge of the Greek language permitted him to enjoy it, the eloquence of the historian (whom he terms 'the father of history') gave him the greatest delight:—that his language 'flows like an unobstructed river:—and that 'nothing can be more sweet than his style.'—*De Oratore* Lib. II. *De Leg.* I. 53. 'Of the same kind is the instance mentioned by Herodotus (Clio 85) of the son of Cræsus, who though dumb, spoke,' &c. *De divinatione*.

PLINY refers to Herodotus frequently; as *Nat. Hist.* (Hardouin's) vol. i. p. 114, 'If we credit Herodotus (*Euterpe* 5) the sea once extended be-

yond Memphis, as far as the mountains of Ethiopia.' p. 256, speaking of the inundation of the Nile, he quotes our author (Euterpe 19) 'the river as Herodotus relates, subsides within its banks on the hundredth day after its first rise:' passing references occur, pp. 260. 370. 436, 'Herodotus, a more ancient and a better authority than Juba, 656. 'Herodotus (Thalia 114) says that ebony formed part of the tribute rendered by the Ethiopians to the kings of Persia;' 'this author composed (corrected) his history at Thurium in Italy, in the 810th year of Rome;' see also pp. 667. 668.

SCYMNUS of Chios, of whose writings some fragments only remain, professes, in his Description of the Earth, to report what 'Herodotus has recorded in his history,' (quoted by Larcher.) This writer is believed to have flourished in the second century before the Christian era.

ARISTOTLE, Rhetoric III. 9, cites Herodotus as an example of the antiquated continuous style. Poetics, Sect. 18, 'If the work of Herodotus were turned into verse, it would not by that means become a poem; but would remain a history.' In his History of Animals VIII. 18, he charges our author with an error, in affirming that 'at the siege of Ninus, an eagle was seen to drink;' but no such assertion is to be found in the works of the historian: probably a passage of some other writer was quoted by Aristotle from



memory, and erroneously attributed to Herodotus; or possibly he quoted some work of this historian which has since perished. *Rhet.* III. 5. The ambiguous reply of the Pythian to Cræsus (*Clio* 53) is quoted, though not explicitly from Herodotus.

CTESIAS, an abstract of whose works is preserved by Photius, is very frequently quoted by ancient authors. See *Diod. Sic.* Book II. 64—84. *Xenophon Exped. of Cyrus*, Book I. and *Pausanias*, Book IX. 21. He was a Greek physician, who accompanied the expedition led against Artaxerxes by his brother, the younger Cyrus. Though a few years younger, he was contemporary with Herodotus: his testimony therefore brings the series of evidences up to the very time of our author. Ctesias, having fallen into the hands of the Persians at the battle of Cunaxa, was detained at the court of Artaxerxes a physician, during seventeen years; and it seems that, with the hope of recommending himself to the favour of 'the great king,' and of obtaining his freedom, he undertook to compose a history of Persia, with the express and avowed design of impeaching the authority of Herodotus, whom, in no very courteous terms, he accuses of many falsifications. The jealousy and malice of a little mind are apparent in these accusations. Nothing can be much more inane than the fragments that are preserved of this author's two works—his

history of Persia, and his Indian history; yet, though possessing little intrinsic value, they serve an important purpose, in furnishing a very explicit evidence of the genuineness and general authenticity of the work which Ctesias laboured to depreciate. If the account given by Herodotus of Persian affairs had been altogether untrue, his rival wanted neither the will nor the means to expose the imposition. But while, like Plutarch, he cavils at minor points, he leaves the substance of the narrative uncontradicted.*

THUCYDIDES, the contemporary and rival of Herodotus, whose writings are said to have kindled in his young mind the passion for literary distinction, makes only an indistinct allusion to the history; yet this allusion is such as can hardly be misunderstood. Book I. 22, in explaining the principles by which he proposed to be guided in writing his history, he glances sarcastically at certain writers, who, in narrating events that had taken place in remote times, mix fables with truth, and who seem to have aimed rather to amuse than to instruct their readers. He then immediately mentions the Median war, which forms the principal subject of his rival's work, and of which that work was the well known record. But if this allusion may not be admitted in evidence, our chain of proof is complete without it.

Citations or allusions similar to these might

* See Note.

be brought forward almost without number ; but every purpose, both of illustration and of argument—if argument were needed, is accomplished as well by a few as by many. From the entire mass of testimonies, if we select, for example, that of Photius, of Plutarch, and of Ctesias, we have proof of the genuineness and integrity of the work which cannot be fairly controverted ; for the existence of these testimonies in the pages of the above-named writers, could never be accounted for if we took the negative side of the question, except by admitting a string of extravagant and incredible suppositions. And when we find the work reflected, as it were, more or less distinctly, from almost the entire surface of ancient literature, no room is left for doubt or controversy. The writers of every age from the time of the author, speak of the work familiarly as being well known in their times :—none of them quote it in such terms as these, ‘an ancient history, said to have been written by Herodotus :’—or, ‘a history which most persons believe to be genuine ;’ but all refer to it as a book in every one’s hands. If therefore the history had been forged in any age subsequent to that of Herodotus, the forger must have had under his controul, for the purpose of interpolation, not only a copy of every considerable work extant in his time, but every copy of every such work :—he must in fact have new created the entire mass of

books existing in the eastern and western world at the time ; and must have destroyed all but his own interpolated copies ; otherwise, some chance copies of some of these works would have reached us in which these interpolated quotations from Herodotus were wanting. Such suppositions are manifestly extravagant. Yet let us for a moment attempt to realize one or two of them.

We will imagine then that this history was forged in the ninth century, by some learned monk of Constantinople for example. On this supposition we must believe that the copyists of that time, in all parts of the Greek empire, being gained over by the forger to favour the fraud, issued new and ingeniously interpolated copies of the following authors ;—namely, Procopius, Stephen, Stobæus, Marcellinus, Julian, Hesychius, Athenæus, Longinus, Laertius, Lucian, Hermogenes, Pausanias, Aulus Gellius, Plutarch, Josephus, Strabo, Dionysius, Diodorus, Aristotle, Otesias, and many others, not cited above. And to this list must be added also many works extant in the ninth century, but since lost. All the previously existing copies of these authors must then have been gathered in and destroyed. But even this is not enough ; for the Byzantine forgers must have gained the concurrence of the Latin copyists, in all the monasteries of western Europe ; otherwise the works of Cicero, and of Quintilian, and of Pliny, would not have contained those refer-

ences to the history which we actually find in them. Now to effect all this, or a twentieth part of it, was just as practicable to any individual of the middle ages, as it would be to alter the spots in the moon: and the impracticability is of the same kind in both cases; for the things to be altered were absolutely out of the reach of those whom we suppose to have made the attempt.

And what do we mean by these interpolations? Not, for the most part, formal sentences, or distinct paragraphs, wedged in where they seem to have little fitness, and loaded with incongruities of style; but citations or allusions of the most incidental kind, perfectly proper to the connection in which they occur, and perfectly congruous with the text.

But let us imagine that the genuine history of Herodotus, referred to as we have seen by earlier writers, had perished, or was supposed to have perished, about the seventh century; and that some forger of the ninth composed a work which should pass in the world for the genuine history. Now besides a capital difficulty, presently to be mentioned, the forger must have had in his memory, as he went along, the entire body of ancient literature, both Greek and Roman, or he could not have worked up all the references and quotations of earlier authors, so as to make them tally, as we find they do, with his spurious

production: and if any of these authors were unknown to him, or forgotten, then we should find discrepant quotations and references, that could not be verified. Moreover, as the genuine work was certainly in existence and widely diffused in the *sixth* century, no writer wishing to make such an attempt, could think himself secure against the existence of some hidden copies of the genuine work, which, if brought to light, would at once expose his own to contempt. Nor in fact was it possible that every copy of a work so universally diffused could have perished from all the libraries of Europe in so short a time as one or two hundred years.

Or we may imagine a forgery to have been attempted nearer to the time of the alleged author. Now just in proportion as we recede from difficulties of one kind, we run upon those of another. For if, to avoid the palpable absurdity of supposing that a huge mass of books, scattered through many and distant countries, were at once called in, and re-issued with the requisite interpolations—we imagine that the work was forged at an earlier time, when fewer testimonies needed to have been foisted into existing books, then we find ourselves in a period when learning was at its height—at Alexandria—throughout Greece, and its colonies;—when every fact connected with the history of books was familiarly known; when many large libraries existed;

when therefore no standard work could disappear or be supplanted by a spurious one; much less could a work which had never before been heard of, at once create to itself the credit of a book long and familiarly known: how could the learned in the east and the west be persuaded that a work newly produced had been in their libraries for a hundred years? Though the knowledge of books is more widely diffused in modern than it was in ancient times, yet among those who peculiarly addict themselves to literature, there is not now more of erudition, of intelligence, of discrimination, than were displayed in the three or four centuries of which the Augustan age formed the centre. To issue a voluminous history, and to persuade the world that it had been known during the last two hundred years, is an attempt not more impracticable in the present day, than it would have been in the times of Dionysius, of Cicero, of Quintilian, or of Plutarch.

If we carry our supposition of forgery still higher—that is to say till we get free from all the difficulties above-mentioned, then what do we gain? The fact principally important as an historical question is granted—namely, that the history was actually extant at, or very near the time commonly supposed: the only point then disputed is the bare name of the author, which, so far as the truth of the history is involved, is a question of inferior consequence. Yet let us pursue this nugatory

doubt:—If Herodotus the Halicarnassian were a real person, known in his time as a writer, then some self-denying forger made over to this Herodotus all the glory of being the author of so admirable a work; and this Herodotus accepted the generous fraud, and acted his part to give it credit. But if the name and designation be altogether fictitious—the real author concealing himself; then how happened it that the Greeks of that age speak of Herodotus as of a real person whom they had known, honoured, and rewarded? In preference to any of these frivolous and impracticable hypotheses, who would not rather accept as true the affirmation which the work bears upon its front?

Our argument has been drawn from one species of evidence—the testimony of contemporary and succeeding writers. Before we pass on, we may take the occasion to point out a possible augmentation of it. Suppose then that after tracing, as we have done, the history of the work in question, through a continued series of quotations, in the Greek and Latin writers, and obtaining by that means alone a conclusive proof of its antiquity, it were discovered that there is in existence a Persian translation of the history of Herodotus, ascertained by the peculiarities of its style, as well as by external evidence, to have been executed in the time of Artaxerxes. Another translation of the same work is then brought forward in the language of ancient Carthage, which,

except in this (supposed) translation, has been long extinct. And another in the Coptic, or ancient language of Egypt; another in the Latin, of the time of Plautus and Terence. If these translations had each descended to modern times, through an independent channel; if each possessed a separate mass of evidence in proof of its antiquity; and if, when collated among themselves, and with the Greek original, they were found to harmonize, except in those lesser variations which must always belong to translations; then, and in such a case, we should possess so many distinct demonstrations—each of them perfect by itself—of the antiquity and integrity of the text now in our hands.

This sort of redundant demonstration does not belong to the Greek historian: but it is possessed in full by the Jewish and Christian Scriptures.

Our plan being to pursue, step by step, a series of definite proofs, we must not insist upon that kind of evidence which is in itself vague, or which cannot be fully appreciated except by scholars. Yet, in passing, this kind of evidence may properly be adverted to; and indeed, though indefinite, it is often in a high degree conclusive. If the case were merely stated without explanations, it must certainly be granted to be *possible* that a writer of a later age, who was a perfect master of the Greek language, who possessed an

endless fund of various learning, and who was gifted in a high degree with the imitative faculty, might produce nine books like those of Herodotus, which, supposing there were no external evidence to contradict the fraud, might pass as genuine. To affirm that such a forgery as this is *possible*, is to allow the very utmost that our knowledge of the powers of the human mind will permit to be granted; and much more than the history of literary forgeries will warrant us to suppose. For all the attempts of that sort that have been detected, either abound with manifest incongruities, or if executed by men of learning and ability, have been formed upon a small scale, and have excluded, as far as possible, all exact references to particular facts.

But the work before us is of considerable extent; its allusions to particular facts are innumerable, precise, and incautious; its style and dialect are, without an oversight, proper to the age to which it pretends:—in a word, it is in every respect what a genuine production of that age ought to be. If then it were to be judged of on the ground of internal evidence alone, no scholar would for a moment hesitate to decide in favour of its genuineness. Yet as the reasons of such a decision are not equally clear to every one, and as they fall a hair's breadth below absolute certainty, we merely notice them incidentally, and pass on.

CHAPTER VI.

ARGUMENT FROM THE GENUINENESS TO THE
AUTHENTICITY OF THE HISTORY.

THAT the Greek text of Herodotus, such as it now appears—excepting only small verbal variations, was extant and well known in Greece at least as early as the commencement of the Peloponnesian war (B. C. 431) is the conclusion that is established by the evidence already adduced. It now remains to inquire how far this proof of the antiquity and genuineness of the work carries with it a proof of the truth of the history.

In a civilized and lettered community, where a free expression of opinion is allowed, and where opposing interests actually exist, a writer who professes to compile an authentic account of transactions that are still fresh in the recollection of the people, can move only within certain limits, even if he wishes to misrepresent facts.—Circumstances known only to a few may be falsified—motives may be maligned—actions may be exaggerated—wrongs and sufferings may be coloured by rhetorical declamations—fair characters may be defamed, and foul ones eulogised :—these are the boundaries of falsification. But if personages

altogether fictitious are made the heroes of the story—if invasions, battles, sieges, conspiracies, are described which never happened—if, in a word, the narrative is a fiction, then it ranks in a different class of productions, and could never gain credit as an authentic account of real and recent events. The same evidence therefore which establishes the existence of an historical work at a time near to that of the events it records, establishes also the *general authenticity* of the narrative;—for the work is not only mentioned by contemporary writers, but mentioned as a professed and acknowledged *history*. This character, granted to the book by the author's contemporaries, contains by condensation the suffrages of the whole community. In substance, we hear the people of Greece assenting to the historian on those principal portions of his narrative, at least, of which they were qualified to form an opinion, and relative to which no writer would attempt to deceive them.

Equity demands that we treat an historian conformably with his own professions. When he narrates events known as well, in substance, to all his contemporaries, as to himself, he is not to be considered as loaded with any other responsibility than that of telling his story well:—in such matters we may ask for proof of his impartiality, or of the soundness of his judgment, but not of his veracity, for his veracity is not taxed. But

when he relates incidents of a private or remote kind ;—when he makes a demand upon the confidence of his contemporaries by affirming things in which *they* could not generally detect his misstatements if he erred ;—then, and in all such cases, we may fairly search for every kind of evidence that bears upon the historian's character, circumstances, and means of information. This is an important distinction, never to be lost sight of in reading history ;—and the inference it contains is this—that a history of *public* transactions, published while many of the actors were still living, and while the events were familiarly remembered by a large number of persons, and which was commonly received as authentic, is, in its principal facts, unquestionably true, even though there should be reason to suspect the impartiality, veracity, or judgment of the writer ; but if in these respects, he is entitled to a common degree of confidence, then nothing more than a few errors of inadvertency can with any fairness be deducted from the narrative.

Every historical work, therefore, needs to be analyzed, and to have its several portions separately estimated.—Whatever is remote or particular will claim our credence according to the opinion we may form of the historian's veracity, accuracy, judgment, and means of information ; but the truth of narratives relating to events that were matters of notoriety in the writer's time, rests

altogether upon a different ground ; being necessarily involved in the fact that the work was published and accepted as authentic at such or such a date. The strength of this inference will best appear by closely examining a particular instance.

In adherence to the distinction above mentioned, we must detach from the history of Herodotus the following portions (not as if they were proved to be false, or even improbable ; but simply because the truth of them cannot be *directly inferred from the genuineness of the work*.)—Geographical and antiquarian descriptions of countries remote from Greece :—The early history of such countries, and indeed the early history of Greece itself :—Events or conferences said to have taken place at the Persian court during the war with Greece ; and lastly, many particular incidents, reported to have happened among the Greeks, but which rest upon single or suspicious evidence. After making these deductions, there will remain all those principal events of the Persian invasion which were as well known to thousands of the author's countrymen and contemporaries as to himself, and in describing which his responsibility is that of an *author* only, who is required to digest his materials in the best manner he can—not that of a *witness*, called to give evidence upon a matter of doubt.

The leading events thus vouched for by the antiquity and genuineness of the work are these—The invasion of Greece by a large Asiatic army,

about five-and-forty years before the publication of the history :—the defeat of that army by the Athenians and Platæans on the plains of Marathon :—a second invasion of Greece ten years afterwards, by an immense host, gathered from many nations :—the desertion of their city by the Athenians :—an ineffectual contest with the invaders at the pass of Thermopylæ :—the occupation of Athens by the Persians :—the defeat of the invading fleet at Salamis :—the retreat of the Persians, and their second advance in the following year, when the destruction of Athens was completed ; and the final overthrow of the Asiatic army at Platea and Mycale. That these events actually took place — the history being genuine—will appear if the circumstances of the case are examined.

At the time when, as it has been proved, the history of Herodotus was generally known and received as authentic, the several states of Greece were marshalled under the rival interests of Athens and of Sparta, and an intestine war, carried on with the utmost animosity, raged by turns in all parts of this narrow territory. Such a period therefore was not the time when flagrant misrepresentations of recent facts, tending to flatter the vanity of one of these rival states, at the expence of the honour of others, could be endured, or could gain credit. The Athenians gloried, beyond all bounds of modesty, in having, with the

assistance of the Platæans only, repelled the Median invasion on the plains of Marathon. But would this boast have been allowed—would the account of the battle given by Herodotus have been suffered to pass without contradiction by the other states, if no such invasion had actually taken place, or if it had been much less formidable than represented by the historian;—or if the other states had in fact been present on the field? Our author affirms that the Lacedæmonians, though fully informed of the danger which threatened the independence of Greece, persisted in a scrupulous adherence to their custom of not setting out upon a military expedition till after the full moon. In the mean time the battle took place, and a body of two thousand Lacedæmonians, afterwards despatched from Sparta, reached the field of battle only time enough to gratify their curiosity by a sight of the slaughtered Medes. This absence of their allies was ever afterwards made matter of arrogant exultation by the Athenians; and the historian in giving his support to their boast, dared the contradiction of one half of the Greeks.

The second invasion of Greece, conducted by the Persian monarch in person, took place ten years after the defeat of the first at Marathon; or about five and thirty years before the publication of the history: many individuals, therefore, were then living who took part in the several battles and engagements; and every remarkable event of



the war was then as well known and remembered in Greece as are the circumstances of the French Revolution by the people of Europe at the present time.

Our immediate object does not demand that we should examine the credibility of the description given by Herodotus of the Asiatic army; for even if it were proved that the numbers are exaggerated, the principal facts would not be brought into doubt, nor even would the credit due to the historian be much impeached, for in all these particulars he is careful, again and again, to remind the reader that he brings forward the best accounts he could collect—not vouching for their absolute accuracy. That he availed himself of authentic documents in compiling this description is rendered evident by the graphic truth and propriety of all the particulars.* Indeed the picture of the Persian army, and of its discipline and movements is strikingly accordant with the known modes of Asiatic warfare. The army of Xerxes consisted of a small body of brave and well disciplined troops, Medes, Persians, and Saces, which, if ably commanded, and unencumbered, might very probably have succeeded in their enterprize; but being impeded and embarrassed by the presence of a vast and disorderly mob of half-savage or dissolute attend-

* See Note.

ants, they were, at every step, surrounded by a wide-spreading desolation—more fatal than the enemy, which rendered the advance of the army in the highest degree difficult, and its retreat desperate. To all this, parallel instances may be adduced from almost every page of Asiatic history.

If it were alleged that Herodotus discovers an inclination on every occasion to place the conduct of the Athenians in the most advantageous light, it might be replied that if such a disposition is charged upon him, then his substantial impartiality and the authenticity of the narrative are proved by his allowing to the Spartans the undivided and enviable glory of having first encountered the invaders at the pass of Thermopylæ. In relating this memorable action he affirms that all the allies under the command of Leonidas, excepting only a small body of Thebans and of Thespians, retired from the pass as soon as it was known that they were circumvented by the Barbarians; and he plainly attributes this desertion to the prevalence of unsoldier-like fears. This statement therefore—like many others in the history—challenges contradiction from the parties implicated in the dishonour.

In recounting the naval engagements which took place in the Eubœan straits, the historian contents himself with affirming that after a doubtful contest, each fleet retired to its station; and

he attributes the final success of the Greeks, not so much to their valour and skill, as to a divine interposition, which, by a violent storm, so far diminished the Persian fleet that the two armaments were reduced to an equality. (See *Urania passim*.)

The ill success of the Greeks in attempting to oppose the advance of the Barbarians at Thermopylæ, and the losses they had sustained in several naval engagements, having reduced them almost to despair, the Athenians, thinking it impracticable to defend Attica, abandoned their city, and took refuge on board their ships, and in the neighbouring islands. The invader therefore was allowed, without opposition, to execute his threat that he would retaliate upon the Athenians the burning of Sardis. Here then we arrive at a definite fact, which may be considered as forming the central point of the history. If this fact be established most of the subordinate incidents must be admitted to have taken place, being nothing more than the proper causes or effects of this main event.

Within so short a period as five-and-thirty, or forty years, it could not be a matter of doubt or controversy to the Athenians, or indeed to any of the people of Greece, whether Athens had been occupied by a foreign army—its halls and temples overthrown or burned—its sacred groves cut down, and its surrounding gardens and fields

devastated. But while several thousand citizens were still living, who were adults at the time of the alleged invasion, and while the structures of the new city were in their first freshness, or scarcely completed; and while, if it had actually taken place, the marks of this destruction must have been every where apparent, a history is published, and universally applauded, in which this invasion of Attica, and this destruction of Athens are particularly described. Now can we reconcile this fact with the supposition that no such events had really taken place—that these arrogant citizens had never been driven from their homes? Can we believe that, for the sake of assuming to themselves the glory of having repelled such an invasion, the entire people of Athens would have given their assent to a fictitious narrative, which every one of them must have known had no foundation in truth? or, if such an infatuation had prevailed at Athens, would their neighbours—the Corinthians, and the Bœotians, have left the preposterous falsehood uncontradicted?

It is evident that unless a powerful invasion of Greece had taken place, Athens—the principal city of Greece, could not have been occupied and destroyed; and unless that invasion had been speedily repulsed, Athens could not have regained that wealth, and power, and liberty which, on other evidence, it is known to have possessed



in the first years of the Peloponnesian war. Here then, if the truth of the history of Herodotus were to be argued, the question must come to its issue. If an opponent denies that such an invasion of Greece happened at the time affirmed by our author, he must reconcile the general diffusion and high credit of the history of Herodotus throughout Greece, with his denial of the fact. On the other hand, the apologist for Herodotus, having established the antiquity and genuineness of the work, cannot be required either to defend the veracity of the historian, or to adduce corroborative evidence in proof of the fact; for until the difficulty which rests upon his opponent's hypothesis is disposed of, he remains in full possession of his position.

The account given by Herodotus of the subsequent events of the Persian war—that is to say—the defeat of the Asiatic fleet at Salamis—the retreat of Xerxes—the second occupation of Athens in the following spring by the Persians under the command of Mardonius, and the final discomfiture and destruction of the Barbarian army at Plataea and at Mycale, will follow of course, as substantially true, if the preceding facts are established. It must however be observed that a peculiar character of authenticity belongs to this latter portion of the history: for though the issue of the war was indeed highly gratifying to the vanity of the Greeks, one would almost think that

the historian wished, as far as possible, to check their exultation, or to balance the vaunts of each of the states by some circumstances of dishonour. No veil is drawn over the absurd and almost fatal contentions for precedency by which the counsels of the confederates were distracted ; nor are the treasons and the interested conduct of the chiefs concealed or excused. The pusillanimity of some, and the fears of all are confessed : indeed so much of infamy or of discredit is thrown by Herodotus upon individuals, and upon the whole community, that the boldness of the author in publishing such statements, and the candour of the Greeks in admitting them, are both worthy of admiration. Nor can we believe otherwise than that a full conviction of the substantial truth of these statements at once inspired the writer with this courage, and compelled his hearers to exercise this forbearance. It cannot seem surprising that in later times some writers, jealous for the honour of Greece at large, or of some particular state, should attempt to remove these blots by impugning the credit of the historian. Yet even in making this attempt, they venture no further than to call in question his account of particular transactions, or to dispute those portions of the work which relate to remote times.

CHAPTER VII.

CONTEMPORARY TESTIMONIES IN PROOF OF
THE FACTS RELATED BY HERODOTUS.

WE have seen that the history of the Persian invasion as given by Herodotus is, in its main circumstances, established by the mere fact that the work was known and accepted as authentic within forty years of the events it records. This then is not an instance in which the veracity of the historian needs to be vindicated, or in which our faith must be dependent upon other evidence. Yet it is natural, after tracing this single line of proof, to look around for such other evidence as may be found to bear upon the history. We have indeed a good right to suppose that events of such magnitude as those which Herodotus relates will be mentioned, more or less explicitly, by other writers of the same age—whether philosophers, poets, orators, or historians. And this in fact is the case in the instance before us; for almost every writer contemporary with Herodotus, whose works are extant, makes allusions of a direct or indirect kind to the Persian invasion.—Some of the authors already adduced in proof

of the antiquity and genuineness of the history, must now be recalled to give evidence on the matter of fact.

PINDAR, the prince of lyric poets, is reported to have died at the age of eighty-six, B. C. 435: he was therefore born B. C. 521, and was in his forty-first year at the time of the Persian invasion. The odes now extant were recited in Greece before the history of Herodotus was composed. The subjects of these compositions are the praises of the victors at the Olympic, the Isthmian, the Pythian, and the Nemean games; and in extolling his heroes, the poet finds occasion to refer to the glories of the cities to which they belonged: they contain therefore many historical allusions to the events of Grecian history; and as these odes were recited at all the great festivals, the allusions were such as the mass of the people could not fail to understand. This sort of incidental and brief notice of public events, intended to kindle the enthusiasm of the audience, must of course rest upon the knowledge or convictions of those to whom they were addressed. In the first of the Pythian odes, a rapid sketch is given of the principal events of the Persian war.—‘Such defeat as they suffered by the Syracusan prince, who manning the swift ships, with the youth, delivered Greece from heavy servitude.—I would choose the praise won by the Athenians at Salamis:—or I would tell at Sparta

the fight near Mount Cithæron, (at Plataea) in which the Medes with their curved bows* were oppressed.'

These allusions may be explained by referring to Herodotus:—Polymnia 156, 166, where it is related, that while Xerxes was advancing towards Greece, the Athenians and Lacedæmonians sent an embassy to Gelon, tyrant of Syracuse, to ask his aid against the Barbarian: this he refused to grant, except upon conditions with which the Greeks could not comply. Yet he fitted out a fleet, and engaged and defeated the Carthaginians, commanded by Amilcar, who had been incited by the Persians to join in the war upon the Greeks: by this victory, Greece was delivered from the danger of an attack which must have proved fatal to its liberties; for if the Carthaginian fleet had arrived in the Archipelago, and joined the Persians, the Greeks could hardly have withstood so vast a combination. The next allusion is to the engagement at Salamis, in which the Athenians, as Herodotus (Urania 84) affirms, took the principal part: and the last, to the final defeat of the Barbarians near Plataea, at the foot of Mount Cithæron. (Calliope 53, et seq.) In this battle, the Spartans were the most distin-

* *αγκυλοβοτοι*. The Median bow as seen in the bas-reliefs of Persepolis, is very properly described by this epithet—it is very long and much curved, even in its extended state.

guished. In the fifth Isthmian ode, another allusion to Salamis occurs — ‘where men innumerable met their death, as by a hail storm of destruction.’

ÆSCHYLUS,* the father of tragedy among the Greeks, had reached manhood at the time of the first invasion of Greece, and took part in the battle of Marathon: he was present also in the engagement at Salamis, and again at the battle of Plataea. Seven only of his tragedies have descended to modern times:—one of these is entitled “*The Persians*.” The scene is laid at Susa in Persia, and the time supposed is during the absence of Xerxes in Greece. The play is opened by a chorus of elders, who discourse anxiously concerning the fate of the expedition; — ‘All Asia is exhausted of men:—fathers and wives count the days, and mourn the long absence of their relatives.’—Atossa the queen enters dejected, and recounts a portentous dream:—a messenger then arrives from Greece; he reports the defeat of the Persian fleet, and the retreat of Xerxes:—in relating the particulars, he glances at the circumstances which preceded the engagement at Salamis, as mentioned by Herodotus (*Uriana* 76, et seq.)—That a messenger (sent by Themistocles) informed Xerxes that the Greeks were about to disperse; to pre-

* *Æschylus* is quoted by Herodotus;—*Euterpe* 156.

vent which he imprudently surrounded them:—an engagement ensued, of which Xerxes was a spectator from a promontory on the coast of Attica:—the Persians are defeated;—those who occupied the island of Psyttalea were all slain. Xerxes retires precipitately, and the army following him, suffers the extremity of hunger and thirst. On hearing this, the queen invokes the shade of Darius, which appears.—Atossa repeats the story of his son's defeat:—The shade predicts the fatal battle of Plataea, and the destruction of the army. In the closing scene, Xerxes himself arrives, bewailing his misfortunes, and bringing back nothing but an empty quiver. The only material point in which Æschylus differs from Herodotus, is in reckoning the Greek fleet at 300, instead of 700 sail:—this is evidently a poetic deviation from fact, intended to enhance the glory of the victory.

Of all the Greek historians, none bears so high a character for general authenticity and for exactness in matters of fact as THUCYDIDES: his impartiality, his laborious collection and judicious selection of materials, and his rejection of whatever seemed to rest on suspicious evidence, are apparent on almost every page of the history of the Peloponnesian war. This history was published about sixty years after the expedition of Xerxes. Thucydides had conversed with many of those who had taken part in the battles de-

scribed by Herodotus. Many allusions to the events of the Persian invasion occur in the course of the work, and they are all of that kind which is natural, when an historian refers to facts which he supposes to be fresh in the recollection of his readers. The introductory sections of the history (1—23) contain an outline of Grecian affairs, from the earliest times to the commencement of the war between Athens and Sparta. In this preliminary sketch, the leading circumstances of the invasion, as related by Herodotus, are mentioned—as, the war between the Persian kings—Cyrus and Cambyses, and the Greeks of Asia Minor:—the naval power of Polycrates, tyrant of Samos; Sect. 13—16.—The Median war, the reigns of Darius and of Xerxes, and the conduct of Themistocles:—14.—The expulsion of the Pisistratidæ from Greece, the battle between the Medes and the Greeks at Marathon, and, ten years afterwards, the second invasion of Greece by the Barbarians; the desertion of their city by the Athenians, and their taking refuge on board their ships—18:—‘Not many years after the expulsion of the tyrants from Greece, happened the battle between the Medes and the Athenians at Marathon; and ten years after that battle, the Barbarians arrived with a great armament, intended to reduce the Greeks to bondage. In this imminent danger, the Lacedæmonians who were more powerful than the other states, took



the command in the war. The Athenians, as the Medes advanced, having resolved to abandon their city, collected all their goods, and went on board their ships; and from that time became a maritime people. After, by their united efforts, the Greeks had repulsed the Barbarian, the several states, as well those which fell away from the king, as those which had fought with the Greeks, took part, some with the Athenians, and some with the Lacedæmonians,' &c. Again, Sect. 23, Thucydides refers to the 'late Median war,' which he says 'was quickly terminated in two battles and two naval engagements.' The battle of Marathon, and the burial of the slain upon the field are mentioned Book II. 34: and in a funeral oration pronounced by Pericles (whether really so or not is of no consequence to the argument) the exploits of the Athenians in repelling the Barbarians are mentioned, as being too well known to need to be particularized;—and Book IV. 59. The conflict at Thermopylæ is mentioned Book IV, 36—the battle of Plataea and the engagement at Artemisium, Book III. 54. The defeat of the Medes—the devastation of Athens, and its restoration are narrated, Book I. 89—93. The distance of time—namely fifty years, between the defeat of Xerxes and the commencement of the Peloponnesian war, is mentioned, Book I. 118. 'All these actions which took place either among the Greeks, or between them and the Barbarians were

included within a period of nearly fifty years, reckoning from the retreat of Xerxes to the commencement of the present war.'

These and some other allusions to the events of the Persian invasion—coinciding as they do with the more ample narrative given by Herodotus, and coming from an historian who made it his boast that he admitted nothing into his work which was not supported by satisfactory evidence, and who moreover was disposed rather to detract from the credit of his rival, than to confirm it, must be held to furnish the most conclusive kind of independent testimony. Indeed the express affirmation of Thucydides that Athens was destroyed by the Persians, affords alone a sufficient proof of the fact: for this affirmation could neither have been made nor tolerated within sixty years after the event, unless it were known to be true.

LYSIAS the orator, at the early age of fifteen years, accompanied Herodotus and other Athenians to Thurium: after a long residence in Italy he returned to Athens, where he distinguished himself by his eloquence. In a funeral oration, pronounced in honour of the Athenians who fell in the Corinthian war, the following passage occurs: 'The king of Asia, unsatisfied with his present greatness, and actuated by a boundless ambition, prepared an army of 500,000 men, hoping by this mighty force to reduce Europe

under his subjection With such rapidity was the victory (at Marathon) accomplished, that the other states of Greece learned by the same messenger the invasion of the Persians, and their defeat; and without the terror of danger, felt the pleasure of deliverance. It is not surprising then that such actions, though ancient (about 80 years,) should still retain the full verdure of glory, and remain to succeeding ages the examples and the envy of mankind. . . . Many causes conspired to engage Xerxes, king of Asia, to undertake a second expedition against Europe. . . . After ten years' preparation he landed in Europe, with a fleet of 1200 sail, and such a number of land forces that it would be tedious to recount even the names of those various nations by whom he was attended. . . . He made a journey over land, by joining the Hellespont, and a voyage by sea, by dividing Mount Athos.' The orator then briefly mentions the engagements at Artemisium and Thermopylæ—the abandonment of Athens, and the removal of the citizens to Salamis:—'their city was deserted, their temples burnt or demolished, their country laid waste.'—See Gillies' *Lysias*.

ISOCRATES flourished a few years later than Lysias, yet he was contemporary with Herodotus. One of his orations, pronounced in praise of the Athenians, contains the following passage: 'They first (the Athenians) signalized their courage

against the troops of Darius (at Marathon). . . . The Persians, a short time after renewed their attempts, and Xerxes himself, forsaking his palace and his pleasures, ventured to become a general. At the head of all Asia he formed the most towering designs. For who, though inclined to exaggeration, can come up to the reality. The conquest of Greece appeared to him an object below his ambition.—Designing to effect something beyond human power, he projected that enterprise, so celebrated, of making his army sail through the land, and march over the sea; and he carried this idea into execution by piercing Mount Athos, and throwing a bridge over the Hellespont. Against a monarch so proud and enterprising, who had executed such vast designs, and who commanded so many armies, the Lacedæmonians, dividing the danger with Athens, drew themselves up at Thermopylæ. With a thousand of their own troops, and a small body of their allies, they determined in that narrow pass to resist the progress of all his land forces. While our ancestors (the Athenians of the *last* generation) sailed with sixty gallies to Artemisium, and expected the whole fleet of the Barbarians. . . The Lacedæmonians perished to a man; but the Athenians conquered the fleet they had undertaken to oppose. Their allies were dispirited. The Peloponnesians, occupied for their own safety, had begun to fortify the Isthmus. . . . The enemy

approached Attica with a fleet of 1200 sail, and with land forces innumerable. . . . The Athenians assembled all the inhabitants of their city, and transported them into the neighbouring island.— And where shall we find more generous lovers of Greece than those who in its defence abandoned their abodes, suffered their city to be ravaged, their altars to be violated, their temples to be burned to the ground, and all the terrors of war to rage in their native country? . . . Athens, even in her misfortunes, furnished more ships for the sea fight off Salamis, which was to decide the fate of Greece, than all the other states together; and there is no one, I believe, so unjust as to deny, that by our victory in that engagement the war was terminated, and the danger removed.’ Gillies’ Isocrates.

CTESIAS, as we have seen, affords a testimony conclusive in favour of the antiquity of the history attributed to Herodotus. We have now to adduce his evidence on the subject of the Persian invasion;—reminding the reader that his history of Persia was composed with the avowed design of invalidating the account given by Herodotus of Persian affairs. Passing over the previous portions of the history, we find the following narrative of the expedition of Xerxes:—‘Xerxes, having collected a Persian army, consisting, besides the chariots of war, of 800,000 men, and a thousand galleys, led them into Greece, by a bridge

which he had caused to be constructed at Abydos. It was then that he was accosted by Demaratus the Lacedæmonian (see Herodotus VII. 101) who passed with him into Europe, and who endeavoured to dissuade the king from attacking the Lacedæmonians. Xerxes arriving at the pass of Thermopylæ, placed 10,000 men under the command of Artapanus, who there engaged Leonidas—chief of the Lacedæmonians. In this conflict a great slaughter of the Persians took place, while not more than three or four of the Lacedæmonians were slain. After this Xerxes sent 20,000 men to the field; these also were overcome, and though driven to fight by blows, were still vanquished. The next day he sent forward 50,000 men; but as these also failed in their attack, he no longer attempted to fight.

‘Thorax the Thessalian, and Calliades and Timaphernes, princes of the Trachinians, were then present (in the Persian camp) with their troops. These, with Demaratus and Hegias of Ephesus, Xerxes called into his presence, and from them he learned that the Lacedæmonians could by no means be vanquished unless they were surrounded and attacked on all sides. Forty thousand Persians were therefore despatched under the command of these two Trachinian leaders, who traversing a difficult path, came behind the Lacedæmonians. Thus surrounded, they fought valiantly, and perished to a man.

Again Xerxes sent an army of 120,000 men, commanded by Mardonius, against the Plataeans :—it was the Thebans who incited the king against the Plataeans. Mardonius was met by Pausanias the Lacedæmonian, at the head of not more than 300 Spartans—1000 of the people of the country—and about 6000 from the other cities. The Persian army being vanquished, Mardonius fled from the field wounded. This same Mardonius was sent by Xerxes to pillage the temple of Apollo; but, to the great grief of the king, perished in the attempt by a hail storm.

‘ Xerxes next advanced with his army to Athens; but the Athenians having fitted out 110 galleys, fled to the island of Salamis:—he therefore entered the deserted city, and burned it, except only the citadel, which was defended by a few who remained; but they, retiring by night, he burned that also. The king then advancing to the narrowest part of Attica, called Heracleum, began to construct a mole towards Salamis, with the intention of marching his army on to the island. But by the advice of Themistocles the Athenian, and of Aristides, a body of Cretan archers was brought up to obstruct the work. A naval engagement then took place between the Persians and the Greeks, the former having more than a thousand ships, commanded by Onophas—the latter seven hundred. Yet the Greeks conquered, and the Persians lost five hundred ships.

Xerxes himself, by the counsel and contrivance of Themistocles and Aristides, fled :—not fewer than 120,000 men having perished on the side of the Persians in these several actions.' Photius, *Myriobiblon*, Art. *Ctesias*.

In those particulars in which this account of the Persian invasion differs from that of our author, no one who carefully compares the two, can hesitate to give his confidence to Herodotus rather than to Ctesias, not only because he lived some years nearer to the events ; but because his narrative displays more judgment, more consistency, and more probability, and is also better supported by other evidence. It is enough for our present purpose that this writer affirms the same great events to have taken place :—That the Persian king led an immense army into Greece, where he met a total defeat.

Of the authors whom we have cited, the first two—Pindar and Æschylus, had reached maturity at the time of the Persian invasion—were personally concerned in its events, and composed the works to which we have referred while Herodotus was yet a youth. Though poets, they represent the victories of the Greeks as recent facts, well known to their hearers, and the slightest allusion to which was enough to kindle the national enthusiasm. The other writers—Thucydides, Lysias, Isocrates, and Ctesias, were all contemporary with Herodotus ; and two of them were his pro-

fessed rivals. From their evidence it is apparent that the events of the Persian invasion were matters of common knowledge and conversation, and were the themes of writers in every class among the Greeks, in the very age in which they are said to have taken place.

It follows therefore that the professed historian of these transactions is not to be regarded as if he were the author of a narrative, for the truth of which he is responsible, and in which we cannot confide until we have proof of his veracity. He is rather the collector of facts, universally acknowledged by his contemporaries:—and the truth of the history rests upon the fact that it was published and accepted while the individuals to whom the events were known were still living.

If we look among the Greek writers of the next and of the following age, we find the same general facts affirmed or alluded to—orators, poets, and historians, hold the same language, and assume it as certain that their ancestors gloriously repulsed an innumerable Asiatic army. But historical proof of a *traditionary* kind differs essentially from that which it is the object of these pages to display; we therefore do not bring it forward in the present instance.

For the same reason those confirmations or illustrations of history which may be derived from existing remains of art—from gems, inscriptions, or sculptures, should be excluded from a

strictly historical argument : such proofs, at least, must never be adduced as if essential or highly important to its establishment.—A double mischief may result from laying stress upon palpable evidences of this kind : in the first place, as there is a strong tendency in the mind to escape from the labour of reasoning, by accepting, without inquiry, any proof that offers itself to the senses, the most conclusive reasoning may lose its hold of our convictions, simply by being conjoined with evidence which *seems* to be more direct and demonstrative :—for example ; after giving attention to the evidence that has been adduced in the preceding chapters, we may feel assured of the fact that the Greeks and Persians fought on the plains of Marathon. There is then shown to us a seal, which, on good evidence, we know to have been picked up upon the very spot that still bears that name in Greece : the device upon this gem is manifestly Persian ;—the winged lions are almost a copy of the bas-reliefs still existing on several ruins in Persia : we conclude therefore that this relic of antiquity belonged to a chief of the Persian army, and accept it as a palpable proof of the truth of the historian's narrative : and though that narrative gains in our view a confirmation, it does so by losing something of its proper weight ; and we are afterwards inclined to think, that if the *tangible* proof were withdrawn, the *written* proof would stand less firmly than before.

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In the second place, the adducing of gems, inscriptions, or sculptures, not merely as illustrations of history, but as substantial proofs, tends to substitute the worse kind of evidence for the better.—The relics of ancient art may be allowed to deserve all the research which the fondness of the antiquary impels him to bestow upon them; but the instances are rare in which they merit to be placed on the same footing of authority with the express evidence of respectable contemporary historians. Fallacies and errors of every kind belong to these articles, so reverently cherished in cabinets and museums. For example: the *traditional* history of the relic is often of very doubtful authenticity, resting altogether upon the word of those who had a commodity of indefinite value to sell;—or the workmanship may be of a much later age than the antiquary is willing to admit;—or the inscription may have been placed by authority, where public opinion (to which an historian is always amenable) could not give contradiction to error. An arrogant republic, or a vain-glorious tyrant, might, without fear, stamp bold lies upon coins, or engrave impudent untruths upon the entablatures of temples; and the brazen or the marble record may receive from the moderns a degree of respect which it never won from the ancients.*—An intelligent inquirer after

* Herodotus mentions some instances of this kind, see Clio 51.

the truth of remote facts will ever give more confidence to the explicit assertions of one with whose character and qualifications he is in some measure acquainted, than to the most positive averments that come from a party altogether unknown. Now an historian is a person concerning whose veracity, discretion, and intentions we have the means of forming our own opinion; but in admitting the evidence of inscriptions and coins, we receive a testimony—knowing nothing of the witness.



CHAPTER VIII.

EXAMPLES OF IMPERFECT HISTORICAL EVIDENCE.

THE object of the preceding pages has been to display, in its several parts, that chain of evidence, by means of which absolute certainty in matters of antiquity is attainable. And it appears that there are cases in which the proof of remote facts rests, as it were, in our own hands, so that irrespectively of the veracity, or accuracy, or impartiality of the witnesses, our assent is demanded on the ground of common sense, and on

the authority of universal experience. In such cases a consideration of distance of time does not enter into the argument; for the proof remains from age to age unimpaired; or rather, we are carried by this proof up to the times of the events in question, and are now as competent to judge of the validity of the evidence as we could have been if we had lived in that age.

The essential difference between this absolute proof and every other sort of historical evidence, will be best exhibited by adducing some instances of a different kind. In taking our examples from the same author, we place both kinds of evidence upon the same level, so far as the personal qualities and merits of the historian are concerned in the argument.

The common and distinctive character of all such historical evidence as ought to be called *imperfect*, is this—that it comes to us through some *medium*, upon which we must more or less implicitly rely. —This medium is ordinarily the veracity, or accuracy—the learning, or impartiality, of the historian. In such instances the *immediate proof* is beyond our reach; and instead of being able to handle and inspect it for ourselves, we can only stand at a distance, and, by the best means in our power, estimate its probable value. This secondary evidence may sometimes rise almost to absolute certainty; or it may possess scarcely an atom of real weight. The first book of Herodotus will furnish

examples in every degree between the two extremes.—

In the introductory sections of his history, our author relates those mutual aggressions which were ordinarily assigned by the authors of his times as the origin of the animosity which so long raged between the Greeks and the people of Asia:—he mentions the abduction of Io from Argos by the Phœnicians—of Europa from Tyre—of Medea from Colchis, and of Helen from Sparta, which last act of violence produced the Trojan war, which the Persians, as our author affirms, were wont to allege as a perpetual justification of every enterprise they might attempt against the Greeks.

These events took place—if at all—from thirteen to eight hundred years before the time of Herodotus:—the last of them—the Trojan war, may well be admitted as substantially true on the authority of the poems of Homer, which too strongly bear the character of history to be treated as pure fiction. As to the abductions above-mentioned, they are to be regarded merely as samples of the manners of the times:—such circumstances, and many others to which neither poets nor historians have given celebrity, no doubt took place on the shores of the Mediterranean, favourable as they have ever been to piratical enterprises. Yet if we can believe that Herodotus actually examined for himself the writings of the



‘ Persian historians ’ whom he quotes, and if he there found coincident narratives of the above-mentioned outrages, these seemingly vague traditions would acquire something like the authority of history.

One fact affirmed by the historian in the outset of his history, deserves a passing notice :—he says, that ‘ the Phœnicians, coming from the shores of the Red Sea (the Persian Gulph, or Indian Ocean) settled upon the borders of *this* sea (the Mediterranean) in the country they now inhabit; whence they made distant voyages, carrying on the commerce of Egypt and Assyria, with the surrounding countries.’ This emigration of the Phœnicians—in itself by no means improbable—the distance between the two seas being not great, and such emigrations being frequent in ancient times, is mentioned or explicitly affirmed by several ancient authors, though denied by Strabo; nevertheless it provoked the ridicule of Voltaire,* who makes the following remarks on the passage: “What does the father of history mean in the commencement of his work, when he says that, ‘ the Persian historians relate that the Phœnicians were the authors of all the wars; and that they came from the Red Sea to our’s.’”
 *It seems then that they embarked on the Gulph of Suez—passed through the straits of Babel

* Quest. sur l’Encyclopédie, part iv. p. 310. quoted by Larcher.

Mandel—coasted along the shores of Ethiopia—crossed the Line—doubled the Cape of Tempests, since called the Cape of Good Hope—ascended the sea between Africa and America, which is the only way in which they could come—re-crossed the Line, and entered the Mediterranean by the Pillars of Hercules, which would have been a voyage of more than 4000 marine leagues, at a time when navigation was in its infancy!”

This passage affords a fair sample of the futility of this writer’s scepticism in matters of history; and it may be taken as an instance of the ease with which a charge of absurdity or falsification may be made out against an historian by a writer who is at once ignorant of facts, and destitute of learning, candour, and modesty. ‘M. Voltaire,’ says Larcher, ‘would have spared himself this criticism, had he possessed even a moderate knowledge of the Greek language. If Herodotus had intended to intimate that the Phœnicians came by sea, he would have said *απικομενους εις τηνδε την θαλασσαν*;—instead of *επι*.* Besides, he would not have added, that ‘they then undertook long voyages;’ as, on the supposition of their having come by sea, they had already made a voyage much longer and more perilous than any they afterwards undertook. But if there remained any doubt as to the intention of the historian,

* They arrived *in* this sea, instead of *upon* (the shores of.)

he himself, in another passage more precise than this, removes it. (Polymnia 89) 'These Phœnicians, as they themselves say, formerly inhabited the shores of the Red Sea, whence passing over —*ἐνδεύτεν δὲ ὑπερβαίντες*, they now occupy the maritime part of Syria.' This expression is understood of traversing a country, or of passing over mountains; but never of making a voyage by sea; at least, I have met with no example, either in Herodotus or elsewhere, of such a sense being attached to the phrase; (he then cites examples from Strabo and Dion Cassius in proof of the proper meaning of the word.) It is clear then from this passage—VII. 89, that Herodotus meant to say that the Phœnicians passed by land and not by sea. 'This journey is in fact not at all incredible; since the distance between the Phœnician town on the Red Sea, and the borders of Phœnicia, is not more than two or three hundred leagues.' Larcher's Herodotus, vol. i. p. 176.

The history, properly speaking, commences with the story of Cræsus, King of Lydia, who reigned at Sardis about a century before the time of Herodotus. The Greeks, especially those of Asia Minor, maintained a frequent intercourse with the Lydians, and must therefore have had some general knowledge of their history; and it is evident that our author made himself acquainted, by personal researches, with all the records and traditions he could find at Sardis. But between

his time and the reign of Crœsus, that city had been once and again pillaged, its ancient government overthrown, the manners of its inhabitants changed,* and probably, most of the ancient families had been banished, exterminated, or reduced to poverty; their places being supplied by Persians and Greeks. It must therefore be believed, that both the authentic records of the state, and the traditions of the people, had to a great extent been dissipated, and that little better than vague reports remained to be collected when Herodotus visited Sardis. We are not therefore to be surprised if we find something of the fabulous in the story of Crœsus and of his predecessors, the kings of Lydia. Yet some of the leading facts were authenticated, not only by histories then extant, but by the gifts of various kinds consecrated by the Lydian kings at Delphi, many of which were preserved in the temple of Apollo at that place in the time of Herodotus: these gifts, by the inscriptions they bore, served to verify the accounts elsewhere received.

At Delphi, Herodotus not only inspected the vessels of gold and silver preserved in the temple where the oracles were given; but he received from the priests *their own copies* of the many responses which he quotes in the course of his

* See Clio 155.

work. In these vaticinative verses the craft of the priests who composed them is, for the most part, sufficiently apparent :—and whatever they may be, their *genuineness* rests entirely upon the honesty of the Delphians, from whom our author received them. Yet the subject of the ancient oracles should not be passed by without acknowledging that, amidst all the glaring frauds, and frivolous evasions, and interested compliances with the wishes of the applicants, which characterise these responses, there is apparent also in some few of them a knowledge of contemporary, though remote events, or a sagacity in relation to the future, which cannot be satisfactorily explained without admitting the interposition of a superhuman agency. An absolute denial of any such intervention, while it is unsupported by a true philosophy, does violence to sufficient historical evidence ; and certainly it is not demanded from the advocate of Christianity by any argumentative necessity.*

The interlocution between Cræsus and Solon, the Athenian legislator, as related by Herodotus,

* A full and satisfactory discussion of the question relative to the ancient oracles and prodigies could not be reduced within narrow limits. If urged to solve some difficulties which the subject presents, I would at once profess my belief, that a system of time-serving fraud, carried on by the priests at the oracular temples, was not unfrequently aided and maintained in credit by the co-operation of infernal beings.

may fairly be numbered among those dramatic embellishments with which many ancient writers—and our author not less than others, thought themselves obliged to relieve the attention of their readers. It need not perhaps be questioned that Solon visited Sardis; and it is not improbable that some rebuke of the Lydian king's preposterous vanity, really uttered by the Grecian sage, may have formed the text of this long conversation. The copious paraphrase was probably the work of a Lydian writer. Of all the conversations and speeches reported by Herodotus, very few, if any, can claim the credit of authentic history.

The story of Adrastus, the Phrygian refugee, and of Atys, the son of Cræsus, if founded in fact, are evidently very greatly indebted to the ingenuity of the narrator. Though these incidents cannot seem otherwise than puerile to a modern reader, we ought to carry ourselves back in imagination to the author's times, before we pronounce them to be trivial or altogether improper in the place where they appear. A student of history who reads only modern compilations, will fail to obtain that just and exact idea of antiquity which these excrescent parts of the works of ancient historians convey.

The history of Cræsus is interrupted by a long digression in which our author gives a sketch of the early history of the Athenians and Lacedæ-

monians. On these points he could not be at a loss for traditions, and other sources of information ; and here also he was open to correction from many of his contemporaries, who were as well informed as himself in matters of Grecian history. Yet the reader should never lose sight of the *dates* of the events severally mentioned, in forming his opinion of the value of the evidence. It is the manner of Herodotus to relate unimportant circumstances which took place—if at all—five hundred or a thousand years before his time, with as much minuteness of detail, and as much confidence as when he is describing recent events. Frequently, it may be supposed, he followed what he deemed authentic documents ; but as we have no means of forming an opinion on the subject, such recitals are scarcely to be admitted among the established points of history, unless confirmed by a coincidence of authorities.

The narrative of the war between Cræsus and Cyrus, which ended in the final dissolution of the Lydian kingdom, is resumed, sect. 69. The leading events of this war could not fail to be well known at the time in Greece ; for besides that the intercourse between Greece and Asia was frequent, Cræsus was on terms of friendship with the Lacedæmonians, and was every where celebrated for the magnificence of his offerings to the Delphic god : and besides, the fall of Sardis, and the consequent conquests of the Persians in

Asia Minor, brought a formidable enemy to the door of Greece, and obliged the several states to inform themselves much more exactly than heretofore, of the affairs of their Asiatic neighbours. We may therefore, with confidence, place the conquests of Cyrus in Asia Minor among the well authenticated facts of history. Yet from the details, as given by Herodotus, some considerable deductions must be made; for an air of dramatic embellishment is apparent throughout the narrative.

Sardis was taken by Cyrus about one hundred years before Herodotus wrote his history: it is not therefore probable that he had the opportunity of verifying his authorities by consulting any living witnesses of the event: it is more likely that he worked up, in his own manner, some floating traditions received from the Asiatic Greeks.* The first circumstance in this narrative which suggests caution to the reader is a prodigy, affirmed to have appeared at the time when Cræsus returned to Sardis, after a doubtful con-

* In a digression which interrupts this part of the history, Herodotus mentions a sudden 'turning of day into night,' which had been predicted by Thales the Milesian. We must therefore suppose him to mean an eclipse of the sun. On this supposition we have a *datum* from which to calculate the chronology of the events with which it is connected; but commentators are not perfectly agreed in fixing upon the eclipse here mentioned. See Note.

flict with Cyrus in Cappadocia. 'At this time all the suburbs of Sardis were filled with serpents, and the horses, leaving the pastures, (or ceasing to eat grass) followed and devoured them. Cræsus seeing this, deemed it—and justly—a prodigy; he therefore immediately despatched messengers to inquire the intention of it from the Telmessians (diviners of Telmessus.) The reply to this inquiry did not reach Cræsus; for before the return of the messengers he was a prisoner. The reply was, that Cræsus had to expect a foreign army, which should vanquish the inhabitants of the country:—'for the serpent,' said they, 'is a son of the earth; but the horse belongs to war and to migration;' (or is a foreigner.) 'Cræsus was already a captive when this reply was given; but of this fact the Telmessians were ignorant when they gave their answer.' Those from whom our author received the dramatic incidents which he presently afterwards relates, found no difficulty in adding to them this prodigy, without which so remarkable an event as the fall of the Lydian kingdom would not, in their opinion, have been properly told.

We are in the next place informed that when the Lydian and Persian armies were opposed to each other under the walls of Sardis, Cyrus, fearing the Lydian cavalry, to which his own was very inferior, practised a stratagem to secure himself against a charge:—he mounted his men upon

the camels that followed the army, and placed them in front of his line :—‘this he did because the horse fears the camel, and cannot endure either the sight or smell of that animal.’ The plan, we are told, succeeded, for ‘the Lydians in vain endeavoured to make their horses advance towards the camels.’ This aversion of the horse to the camel was believed by the ancients to exist.* Common experience in modern times gives no support to the notion; yet we are not authorised to affirm absolutely that no such circumstance could take place :—The Lydian horses had perhaps never seen camels, and some confusion might arise from their presence on the field. Nevertheless, the manner in which the fact is affirmed, suggests the supposition that our author’s informants were not scrupulously regardful of truth.

The Lydians were beaten, driven within their walls, and besieged by Cyrus, and after fourteen days, the fortress was scaled, the city pillaged, and Cræsus led a captive before the Persian conqueror. The circumstances of the assault are variously related by ancient authors. Herodotus, Xenophon, Ctesias, and Polyænus, though agreeing in the general result of the events they record, evidently drew their information from sources so discordant as to prove the absence of authentic memorials. The account given by our

* See Xenophon’s *Cyropædia*, VII. 7.

author of the treatment of the royal captive by the conqueror, and of the conversation affirmed to have taken place between the two kings, besides that it is at variance with other narratives of the same transactions,* does not recommend itself to our credence by an air of plain historical simplicity. Justice to Herodotus demands that we should remember in this, and many other similar instances, that he professes only to report the accounts he had been able to collect, without pledging himself for their accuracy; and not seldom he intimates his own doubts of the truth of such relations.

Crœsus, confounded by misfortunes which seemed to give the lie to the Delphic god, whose favour and advice he had courted by gifts of unexampled richness, requested permission of Cyrus to send the fetters he had worn, to Delphi, to be laid on the threshold of the temple;—directing the messenger to ask the Grecian god ‘if it was his custom to delude those who merited the best at his hands.’ This request was granted; and the Lydian messenger brought back a reply which, whether or not it may be considered as genuine, is curious if taken as a specimen of the policy and style of the Pythian.† Even though we should think with Crœsus, that the god cleared himself pretty well of the taunts thrown at him by his disappointed votary, he did so by descend-

* See *Cyropæd.* VII. 12.

† See Note.

ing to paltry explanations, very little befitting his oracular dignity.

Having dismissed the Lydian affairs, our author proceeds to give a sketch of the history of the Assyrians, Medes, and Persians, and to relate the story of the elevation of Cyrus to supreme power in Upper Asia. That he had visited Persia cannot fairly be questioned, nor need it be doubted that he diligently availed himself of every means in his power to acquire information. Whether he was master of any of the eastern languages does not certainly appear; for though he frequently refers to the Persian historians, and though, in one place, I. 189, he makes a philological remark on a peculiarity of the Persian language, we must ask more direct proof of his possessing an accomplishment so rare among the Greeks. We must however believe, that, at least by means of an interpreter, he had consulted the Persian writers:—in commencing the history of Cyrus he says, ‘I shall follow those Persian writers who, without endeavouring to exaggerate the exploits of Cyrus, seem to adhere to the simple truth;—yet not ignorant that three different accounts of him are abroad.’ Whether these three accounts are in fact those given by himself, by Xenophon, Ctesias, and Æschylus, cannot be ascertained. It is evident that exaggerations and errors abounded among the oriental historians: the Greeks therefore, having at best a very imperfect access to

these discordant authorities, must be perused at once with diffidence and caution :—nothing would be more unsafe than to rely with any degree of confidence upon any of these narratives ;—nothing more absurd than to found upon them any objections to statements which we derive from a source much more credible. Independently of the *authority* of the Jewish Scriptures, it is manifest that the Jews, by the affinity of language—by proximity of situation—by long continued intercourse, and by subjugation and transmigration, must have been much better informed on points of Assyrian, Median, and Persian history, than the Greeks. With the greatest reason therefore, we may take the historical notices of Asiatic affairs which are scattered through the Scriptures as our guide—not careful whether Herodotus, Ctesias, and Xenophon, accord with these notices, or differ wholly from them.*

* It will not seem impertinent to quote in this place, a paragraph from Larcher's preface to his translation of Herodotus :—the reader may remember that this learned, intelligent, and candid writer was surrounded by the infidelity of revolutionary France.

‘ Enfin, intimement convaincu de toutes les vérités qu’enseigne la Religion Chrétienne, j’ai retranché, ou réformé toutes les notes qui pouvoient la blesser. On avoit tiré des unes des conséquences que j’emprouve, et qui sont loin de ma pensée. D’autres renfermoient des choses, je dois l’avouer avec franchise et pour l’acquit de ma conscience, qu’un plus mûr examen et des recherches plus approfondies m’ont démontré

A general conformity with facts is all that we ought to expect from the Greek historians when they speak of the remote history of Asia. Herodotus at Babylon, or at Susa, must have been almost entirely dependent upon the good faith of the learned men with whom he happened to form acquaintance; and even if we give them credit for as much honesty as is usually practised on similar occasions towards foreigners—and him for a great measure of diligence and discretion, we shall scarcely find reason for considering these portions of the work as more than probably true in the general outline of events. Herodotus must however be allowed to rank far above Xenophon, on the ground of authenticity; for it would evince an extreme credulity to speak of the *Cyropædia* otherwise than as a political romance.* Diodorus evidently had access to sources of information not open to Herodotus, and the statements of the later may well be admitted in correction of those of the earlier historian. Justin, or rather Trogus, seems to follow our author in his incidents, varying

reposer sur de trop légers fondemens, on être absolument fausses. La vérité ne peut que gagner à cet aven. C'est à elle seule que j'ai consacré toutes mes veilles. Je me suis empressé de revenir à elle dès que j'ai cru l'avoir mieux saisie. Puisse cet hommage, que je lui rends dans toute la sincérité de mon cœur, me faire absoudre de toutes les erreurs que je puis avoir hasardées, et que j'ai cherché à propager!—*Preface*, p. 39.

* See Note.

from him only in the order of some events. Josephus in his reply to Apion treats the Greek historians with great contempt when they presume to speak of Asiatic affairs : urging against them their many contradictions, and their want of really ancient and authentic documents, and quoting, as of higher authority, several works of which these citations are almost the only remaining fragments.

Without then impeaching the character of Herodotus, we may peruse the earlier portions of his history as a highly entertaining narrative, held together by a connected thread of truth, and supporting a series of incidents which though characteristic of the times, are nearly destitute of historical authority. Of this kind, evidently, is the story of the birth and early adventures of Cyrus, in which, not to mention some palpable bungling, the art of the narrator in working up his materials, is apparent.—Probably some popular tales communicated to our author in Persia, were adapted by him to the taste of the Greeks. In his accounts of the manners, usages, habits, and buildings of the nations he visited, and of the features and productions of the countries through which he travelled, our author is unquestionably deserving of a high degree of confidence; and though some few particulars, plainly fabulous, are mingled with these descriptions, they must be admitted to take place among the most interesting and valuable of

all the remains of ancient literature. The account of the manners of the Persians, Sect. 131—140, and of those of the Babylonians, with the description of Babylon, Sect. 178—187, and 192—200 are at once highly entertaining, as well as authentic.

The narrative of the subjugation of the Ionians and Æolians of Asia Minor, by the Persians—commencing Sect. 141, stands, for the most part, upon a higher ground of authority than those which precede and immediately follow it; not only because the transactions were comparatively recent; but because the affairs of these Asiatic Greeks were, at all times, well known to those of Europe. In the course of this narrative an incident is related—Sect. 158, which is peculiarly characteristic of the ancient oracles,* demonstrating that the divinity was more sagacious in anticipating the propable course of political events, than happy or honest in deciding questions of common morality.

The capture of Babylon by Cyrus, was an event too remarkable in itself, and in the extraordinary circumstances attending it, to leave room for any considerable diversity among the accounts of it which were transmitted to the next age. The Greek historians differ but little in relating this memorable event, and their testimony, absolutely inde-

* See Note.

pendent as it is, when collated with the circumstantial predictions of the Jewish prophet, furnishes a proof of the divine authority of the Hebrew Scriptures never to be overthrown. If the history of Herodotus had no other claims to attention, it would have claim enough by affording, as it does, in several signal instances, an unexceptionable testimony in illustration of the fulfilment of prophecy.—The same importance attaches perhaps in an equal degree to the work of Diodorus.

The expedition of Cyrus against the Massagetes, a Scythian nation, in which he perished, closes the first book of the history. Here again there seems reason to suspect a want of authentic information. The scene of action was remote, not merely from Greece, but from Persia, and the survivors of the Persian army told when they returned, each his own tale of wonder: nor is it probable that any other account of the war was extant in the time of Herodotus than what had been received from these persons.

The instances that have been mentioned, drawn from the first book of Herodotus, may serve as examples of the different degrees of authority which may belong to different portions of an historical work—dependent both upon the means of information probably possessed by the writer, and upon his liability to contradiction and correction from his contemporaries. On this principle, if the instances above mentioned are duly considered,

no one can fail to perceive that there is so essential a difference between one kind of historical evidence and another, that, in perusing the pages of an historian, we may deem some of the facts he relates absolutely certain, and others doubtful, improbable, or unreal; while, in the former instances, perhaps we think him inaccurate and prejudiced; and in the latter give him credit for good intentions and diligence. For with the worst intentions, and the meanest qualifications, an historian of recent events, whose writings are received in his own times as authentic, cannot be charged with an entire and glaring falsification of facts; on the other hand, the most cautious, industrious, and scrupulous writer, who compiles the history of remote times, and of foreign nations, may wander very far from the path of truth.

CHAPTER IX.

THE OPPUGNERS OF HERODOTUS.

HERODOTUS, as we have already had occasion to mention, was severely reprehended by several ancient writers, especially by Ctesias, Manetho, Diodorus, Strabo, Josephus, and, above all, by

Plutarch. The grounds of exception taken by these writers are, in some instances just; in many, the influence of prejudice or petty jealousy is apparent; yet none of these criticisms affect that part of the history which alone we allege to be unquestionably authentic. But modern authors also have attacked the reputation of the historian, and it seems necessary to take a brief notice of some of these more recent criticisms; for if it is affirmed of a portion of this history, that its truth is absolutely certain, it ought to be shown, that the facts in behalf of which so high a claim is advanced have never been called in question;—or never, with any degree of plausibility.

Several of the critics of the 15th and 16th centuries, taking offence at some of the less authentic portions of this work, and especially at some ill-understood descriptions of animals and plants, speak of the historian as a compiler of fables: thus J. Ludovicus Vives, the learned Spaniard, so well known in England during the reign of Henry VIII. in a treatise on education, speaks of the books of Herodotus as abounding in things untrue. Parker says, ‘Herodotus, that he might not seem to have omitted any thing, brought together, without selection, matters of all kinds; of which the greater part were derived, not from ancient records, but from the fables of the vulgar. And although his style is agreeable, and even elegant, he forfeits the confidence of those who exercise

a sound and impartial judgment ; for such readers cannot give credence to a work so crammed with various narrations.—By some indeed he is called by the title he seemed to affect—that of the father of history ;’ but by others he is justly named the ‘ father of fables.’

Bodin, in his ‘ Method of History,’ says, ‘ I wonder that Cicero should have designated Herodotus alone as the father of history, whom all antiquity accuses of falsehood ; for there cannot be a greater proof that an historian is unworthy of credit, than that he should be manifestly convicted of error by all writers. Nevertheless I do not think that he ought to be wholly rejected ; for besides the merit of eloquence, and the charm of the Ionic sweetness, there is in him much that holds forth antiquity, and many things *in the latter books* of his history, are narrated with an exact adherence to truth.’

Wheare, in his ‘ Method of reading History,’ thus speaks of our author ; — ‘ Although Herodotus gives some relations that are not much better than fables, yet the body of his history is composed with eminent fidelity, and a diligent pursuit of truth. Many of those less authentic narratives he himself introduces by saying that he reports not what he thinks true, but what he had received from others.’

‘ It would be absurd,’ says Isaac Vossius, ‘ to confide in Herodotus alone, in what relates to

Persian and Babylonian affairs; seeing that he was unacquainted with the Persian language, and unfurnished with the records of any of the nations of the east.* Bishop Stillingfleet speaks of the historian very much in the same strain as the authors above quoted. He has also been uncourteously treated by some later writers; of these Voltaire is the most distinguished. Whenever occasion presents itself he labours to cast contempt upon the father of history. Of this writer's ignorance and flippancy in commenting upon Herodotus, we have already adduced an example: others of a similar kind might easily be cited. Thus—Quest. sur l'Encyclop.—he represents the historian as *affirming*, in a number of instances, what he professes only to report:—as the story of Arion, and that of the Lydians who are said to have invented various games to allay the pains of hunger. Philos. de l'Hist. p. 63.—he denies as utterly incredible the account given by Herodotus—Clio 199, of the dissolute manners of the Babylonians:—‘that which does not accord with human nature, can never be true.’ Yet the customs alluded to are expressly affirmed to have prevailed there by Strabo, and distinctly mentioned by a writer whose evidence in such a case need not be suspected—Baruch. VI. 43; and usages not less revolting are known to have been

* The above quotations are derived from Blount.

established in many ancient cities. So indifferent to common justice was Voltaire, when an opportunity offered itself of exaggerating a seeming improbability, that when Herodotus narrates the conduct of Cyrus, who, to avenge himself of the river Gyndes, drained it by cutting three hundred and sixty trenches from it; he quotes him as saying that the *Indus* was so drained, and made to flow into the Caspian Sea!—‘What should we say to Mezeray, if he had told us that Charlemagne cut the Rhine into three hundred and sixty canals, emptying themselves into the Mediterranean?’

In several instances, either from ignorance or malice, Voltaire mistranslates Herodotus, in such a manner as to create an absurdity or impropriety which does not exist in the original:—See *Quest. sur l'Encyclop.* VII. Art. *Initiation*, and sometimes he cites passages no where to be found in our author, as—*Philos. de l'Hist.* p. 197. Herodotus—*Thalia* 72, affirms that it was the custom of the Scythians to empale a number of persons, having first strangled them, as a part of the funeral rites with which their kings were honoured. But Voltaire makes the historian affirm that the victims of this barbarous custom were empaled alive; and then finds occasion to deny the truth of the story. He thinks the numbers affirmed to have composed the army of Xerxes altogether incredible:—on this point Larcher makes the following remarks:—‘M. Voltaire need not therefore have

regarded this history as a fable, or have supposed that Xerxes must have had a hundred millions of subjects to furnish an army of two millions. Our usages must not serve as a rule by which to judge of those of the ancients. If M. Voltaire had lived only twenty years later he would have seen realized in France what he could not believe of Persia. The only reasonable objection which might be advanced against the account given by Herodotus is precisely that which M. Voltaire has not made:—How could so immense an army be supplied with provisions? Herodotus has met this objection,—“We have with us,” he makes Xerxes say, “a great quantity of provisions; and all the nations against whom we are about to make war are agriculturalists—not feeders of cattle:—we shall therefore find corn which we may appropriate.” Authors vary much as to the number of this army—Ctesias making it amount to 800,000, without reckoning the charioteers: Diodorus following Ctesias, gives the same number; Elian reckons it at 700,000; Pliny at 788,000; Justin at 1,000,000. Herodotus, who was nearly a contemporary, and who read his history to the Greeks assembled at the Olympic games, where were many who had taken part in the battles of Salamis and Plataea, is more to be believed than later historians.’—Larcher’s Herod. v. V. p. 310.—If persons are still to be found who pay any respect

to Voltaire's criticisms upon points of Scripture history, they would do well to examine, with some care, the grounds of his remarks upon Herodotus. If in the case of a Greek historian, towards whom we may suppose him to have entertained no peculiar ill feeling, we find him displaying ignorance, indifference to truth, and a senseless flippancy;—what may we expect when he attacks those writings towards which he avows the utmost hostility of intention?

Under all these attacks Herodotus has not wanted apologists; and while the writers above mentioned, taking an unfair advantage of some suspicions or evidently fabulous passages, for the truth of which the historian does not pledge himself, have hastily accused him of a want of veracity;—others, more candid and more exact, have entered into the details of these accusations, and have shown, either that the author's credit is not really implicated in the narratives he brings together; or that these accounts are much better founded than, at first sight, they may appear. The editors and translators of Herodotus—Aldus, Camerarius, Stephens, Wesseling, Gronovius, &c. have, in their prefaces and notes, undertaken his defence; in some instances establishing the disputed facts; in others excusing the author from the charge of falsification. These discussions relate, for the most part, to those parts of the

history which we exclude from our present argument; and with which therefore we have here no immediate concern.

The general veracity of the historian is asserted in the following terms by Larcher :—‘ Few writers can pretend to have united in so eminent a degree as Herodotus the various excellencies proper to an historian. Let us in the first place speak of his love of truth. Whoever reads his history with attention, easily perceives that he has proposed to himself no other object but truth; and that when he entertains a doubt he adduces both opinions, leaving it to his readers to choose which they please of the two. If any particular seems to himself unauthentic or incredible, he never fails to add that he only reports what has been told him. Among a thousand examples I shall cite but two.—When Neco ceased to dig the canal which was to have led the waters of the Nile into the Arabian Gulph, he despatched from this gulph certain Phœnicians, with orders to make the circuit of Africa, and to return to Egypt by the Pillars of Hercules, now known as the Straits of Gibraltar. These Phœnicians returned to Egypt the third year after their departure, and related, among other things, that in sailing round Africa, they had had the sun (rising) on their right hand. Herodotus did not doubt that the Phœnicians actually made the circuit of Africa; but as astronomy was then in its infancy, he could not

believe that in this voyage they had really seen the sun on the right hand :—"this fact," says he, "appeared to me by no means credible ; yet perhaps there are those to whom it may seem so."

'Take another example. —The Psyllians were an inconsiderable people of Libya, occupying an inland district near the Syrtian Gulph : as their country was entirely destitute of water, they preserved the rain water in cisterns. The south wind having dried up these reservoirs, they resolved with one consent to make war upon this wind :—it is scarcely conceivable that a project so absurd should enter the minds of men ;—Herodotus felt this, and fearing lest some of his readers might suspect him of believing such tales, he adds,—"I relate what the Libyans affirm." (Melpomene 173.)

'Another point which has not been duly attended to is, that very often he commences his narrative thus,—The Persians—The Phœnicians—The Egyptian priests, have told me this or that. These narrations, which sometimes extend to a considerable length, are, in the original, throughout, made to depend upon this word *φασί* — *they say*, either expressed or understood. The genius of our modern languages obliging us to retrench these phrases, it often happens that Herodotus is made to say in his own person what in fact he reports in the third person. Thus things have been attributed to him, for the authenticity of which he is very far from vouching.

‘He travelled in all the countries of which he has occasion to speak, he examined with scrupulous attention the rivers and streams by which they are watered—the animals which belong to them—the productions of the earth—the manners of the inhabitants—their usages, as well religious as civil;—he consulted their archives—their inscriptions, their monuments; and when these means of information failed him, or appeared to him insufficient, he had recourse to those among the people who were reputed to be the most skilled in history. He even carried his scrupulosity so far, that though he had no just reason for distrusting the priests of Memphis, he repaired to Heliopolis (Euterpe 3.) and then to Thebes, in order to discover if the priests of these latter cities agreed with those of Memphis.

‘One cannot refuse confidence to an historian who takes such pains to assure himself of the truth. If, however, notwithstanding all these precautions, it has sometimes happened to him to be deceived, I think he deserves in such instances rather indulgence than blame. Herodotus is not less exact in all matters of Natural History than in historical facts. Some ancient writers have dismissed, as fabulous, some particulars which have since been verified by modern naturalists—much more learned than the ancients. The celebrated Boerhaave did not hesitate to say,

in speaking of Herodotus*—"modern observations establish almost all that great man's assertions." The testimony of a philosopher so distinguished must, in the opinion of all intelligent persons, outweigh the frivolous declamations of those sciolists whose acquaintance with the sciences is but superficial.' Preface, pp. 2—6.

Some English writers also, wishing, as it seems, like Voltaire, to bring all history under suspicion, by endeavouring to prove that the best authenticated facts may, with some show of reason be questioned, have impugned the testimony, not of Herodotus alone, but of all the Greek historians. Of these writers none has ventured further than Richardson,† the Persian Lexicographer. He does not indeed positively deny the fact of a Persian invasion of Greece; but he accuses Herodotus and other writers of exaggerations, to such an amount as must, if we were to admit the charge, not only utterly destroy our confidence in their veracity, but remove all respect for their common sense, and for that of the people at large. Richardson supposes that the Greeks were, in political im-

* Hodiernæ observationes probant fere omnia magni viri dicta.—*Elementa Chymiae*. tom. i. p. 550.

† Dictionary, Persian, Arabic, and English; with a Dissertation on the Languages, Literature, and Manners of Eastern Nations. First published 1777. The Dissertation was afterwards printed in a separate form. See Note.

portance, vastly inferior to the Persians, to whom he imagines them to have been tributary; and that the invasion of Greece was nothing more than the march of a Persian viceroy into Europe, to enforce the due payment of the tribute from these vain and insignificant republicans. On what foundation then do these bold surmises rest? Not on the defectiveness or inconsistency of the evidence furnished by the Greek historians;—nor yet on contradictory evidence, derived from other sources: but on the mere absence of evidence where this learned linguist thought it must have been found, if the narratives of the Greeks were true.

In examining the remains of ancient Persian literature, and the records of Persian history, Richardson professes that he could discover no traces of accordance between the Asiatic and European writers;—no personages whose adventures or exploits could be identified with those attributed by the latter to Cyrus, to Cambyzes, or to Darius; and then, assuming that the Persian literature is the more authentic of the two, he rejects the Grecian, as being little better than a mass of puerile extravagances.

Now even if the question were to rest on this balance of merit between the Oriental and Grecian literature, it is evidently an unsubstantial as well as inequitable mode of reasoning which gives to a mere want of evidence on one side, a weight

more than equal to a mass of positive evidence on the other. But, in fact, this negative proof to which so high a value is attributed, may be shown to arise, not from the nullity of the facts recorded by the Greeks, but from the utter deficiency of all ancient and authentic historical documents among the Persians.*

But to discuss the question as if its issue must absolutely depend upon the value of such evidence as may be derived from the eastern literature, would be at once a cowardly abandonment of the better documents for the worse, and a relinquishment of the proper grounds of historical argumentation. It is a violence done to common sense to leave, in undiminished force, one body of evidence, while, on hypothetical grounds, we draw conclusions with which that evidence can by no fair means be reconciled.—A writer, for example, might please to affirm that nothing is more improbable in itself, than the invasion of Africa by Charles V. especially if the historians of Tunis make no mention of the fact. There might be room for such surmises, if the testimony of the European historians in this particular were scanty or glaringly suspicious; but while it is abundant and unimpeachable, such affected scepticism is altogether absurd.

It may be granted, that if the last three books

* See Note.

of Herodotus were examined apart from all other Greek writings and monuments, some considerable deductions might, with an appearance of reason, be made from the account he gives of the Persian invasion. But the history is not, in fact, thus insulated, and its claims to our confidence cannot be fairly estimated, unless it be viewed as a part only of those various materials from which we collect our idea of the power, spirit, and intelligence of the Greeks. If from the stores of the Grecian literature we were to select only the poems of Homer, the orations of Demosthenes, and the philosophical treatises of Aristotle, we should possess ample and conclusive proof of the reality of the Grecian history in its principal circumstances. And if this written evidence is compared with that which still speaks from the existing sculptures and temples of the same people—the frigid surmises of the writer above-mentioned fall into contempt.

From such documents it is most safely inferred that the soil of Greece, during a long course of time, supported a numerous people, eminently endowed at once with the physical qualities of strength, beauty, alacrity, and courage, and with a mental conformation, combining the ratiocinative and imaginative faculties in the happiest proportions. We may conclude also, that these advantages, inherent in the race, were improved; that a very high degree of civilization in almost

all its branches, and of refinement was attained, that the resources of an extensive commerce were possessed, and a large amount of political power acquired by the Greeks; or to express all at once—that the Greeks were then, what the English, the French, and the Germans are now, compared with the rest of mankind.

Even if it could be made to appear probable, that in the first ages of the world Asia—and in Asia, Persia, was the centre of civilization,* yet it must be granted that so far as authentic history reaches, the picture of the Asiatic nations is uniform in its character and colouring.—Amidst its millions—infirm both in body and mind, Asia has indeed produced some races distinguished by a fierce energy—by romantic courage—by loftiness and richness of imagination. But where is there a people of Asiatic origin, that has displayed the cool and effective energy, the high and consistent intelligence, the exquisite taste, the well-directed and sustained industry, which belong to the European nations?—No such products of the east can be named. Never have its hordes risen to that level on the scale of intelligence at which men become at once desirous of political liberty, and capable of enjoying so great a good.

The relation which modern European armies—those of the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French,

* See Note.

and the English, have always borne to the native forces of India, is very much the same as that which history affirms to have existed in all ages between the people of the east and of the west. Though the latter have not driven the former before them like sheep: they have at length prevailed as men prevail over wolves;—they have conquered, as courage conquers rage—as mind subdues mere force, and as skill is more than numbers. It is, in substance, the same story that we read, whether the page of history presents us with the exploits of Clive in India, or of Pompey in Parthia and Syria, or of Alexander in Persia, or of Miltiades at Marathon.

The narrative of Herodotus is therefore nothing more than the first chapter of the history of the perennial conflict between Asia and Europe: and this commencement of the story is in perfect harmony with all its subsequent events. On the one side is seen a brutal and extravagant despotism, seated on the floods of a boundless population, and at the instigation of puerile or ferocious ambition, letting forth a deluge of war, the course of which was as little directed by skill, as it was checked by humanity. On the other side are seen incomparably smaller means employed with incomparably greater intelligence:—and excepting only the partial events of war, the general issue has ever been the same.*

* See Genesis ix. 27.

That idea therefore of the relative power, importance, and intelligence of the Greeks and Persians, which some modern writers would substitute for the notion imparted by the Greek historians, is not only destitute of positive support; but it is substantially at variance with the continued history of the two great divisions of mankind from the earliest to the latest times.

CHAPTER X.

VALUE AND USE OF SPONTANEOUS TESTIMONY —BOUNDARIES OF AUTHENTIC HISTORY.

WHOEVER has frequently been called to give his voice in determining controversies between man and man, or between a man and his country, upon the evidence adduced in a court of justice, must not seldom have felt that all his doubts on an obscure question would vanish, if it were possible for him, instead of listening to the formal and solemn contradictions of witnesses, to hear the spontaneous conversations which have taken place among uninterested persons in the neighbourhood which was the scene of the disputed transactions. Although in the mass of such local colloquies, there would doubtless be much impertinent gossip, and much exaggeration, and

perhaps not a little wilful falsehood, yet an intelligent and impartial hearer of this common talk would seldom find it impracticable, by discrimination and comparison, to disentangle truth from the confused heap of words. And almost always, if he must choose the one or the other, he would prefer to give his verdict upon a hearing of the casual evidence to be collected on the spot, rather than upon the formal evidence adduced in court.

Under the peculiar circumstances of the case, the oath—or an equivalent to the oath, administered to witnesses, cannot be dispensed with:—for the witness ought in equity to be placed on equal terms with the party against whom his evidence is to weigh:—that is to say—he must be made to stand beneath a penal consequence while he speaks to the hurt of another. This then is the real significance and use of an oath in a court of justice:—every witness is the *antagonist*, either of the plaintiff, or of the defendant, or of the accused, or of the king.—But no man must be suffered to attack another without hazard to himself—without a nearly equal hazard. To prevent so great a wrong, the witness is required, before he speaks, to put the sword of the law into the hand of the man whose life, honour, liberty, or property he is about to bring in peril. This he does by taking an oath which makes him liable to punishment in case of wilful falsification.

The same important and necessary balancing of interests might, perhaps, be obtained as well without the formality of swearing as with it. For all that justice demands is that every witness should give his evidence beneath the penal arm of the law ; and if an unsworn lie, uttered in court, were punishable as perjury is punishable, the result to the interests of accused persons, and of contending parties, would be the same.

The forensic oath is not then to be considered as a means peculiarly adapted to the purpose of securing the *truth* of evidence ; but merely as *an extension of the conditions of the controversy* to all the parties who are called to touch the question ; the modern oath being, in the eye of the law, the substitute for the weapon granted to the accused party in the feudal trial by wager of battle. Few persons accustomed to attend courts of justice will profess to think that evidence given upon oath is ordinarily the best and the least fallacious of all kinds of evidence. That common experience does not warrant a peculiar deference to it, is often made manifest in the course of legal proceedings : for when it happens that a clown, or a youth, in giving evidence, becomes, for a moment, unconscious of the forms by which he is shackled, and forgetful of the lesson in which he has been schooled by attorneys, and bursts forth with some spontaneous expression of his honest convictions—these few words, forming,

as it were, a parenthesis of nature in the formal evidence, will often outweigh, in the minds of the jury, a whole day's swearing on the part of witnesses, who have too much wit ever to forget the interests of the party for whom they appear.

A similar effect is produced by the adducement of letters in evidence: these, if known to be genuine, and if they are manifestly spontaneous—that is to say, not written under an anticipation of their serving the purpose for which now they are produced, are felt to have a value which entitles them to a preference above all other evidence; the jury, without at all depending upon the *veracity* of the letter-writer, draw, with ease and confidence, their own inferences from the language he uses, when he is impelled only by the feelings or interests of the moment, and is thoughtless of the distant consequences that may result from his admissions or incidental allusions to matters of fact.

Truth is a commodity which we do well rather to gather up than to demand:—on this principle the preference, above-mentioned, is involuntarily given to spontaneous, over formal evidence. And, guided by this same principle, the intelligent student of history pursues his investigations in remote paths. While he scorns the frigid scepticism of those who, without cause, reject the formal assertions of respectable writers, he reserves his fullest confidence for those statements

in which no one's integrity is taxed, and for those inferences which he draws *for himself* from documents of a spontaneous kind, unquestionably belonging to the times and persons they pretend to.

The primary materials of history are all those writings, of whatever class, which can, with certainty be proved to belong to the age and country to which our inquiries relate. Among these various contemporary writings, we grant, by courtesy, the first place of honour to professed histories. In estimating the value of such works, an extreme solicitude relative to the author's character and intentions is both unnecessary and frivolous;—for an ordinary measure of good sense and intelligence, and a fair character among his countrymen for authenticity, afford all the security that is needed for the truth of the principal events. Next to these professedly historical works, we naturally examine the general literature of the times, not doubting that we shall find scattered through it many notices of passing events, serving the double purpose of elucidating and of confirming the statements of historians. And as in judicial proceedings, so also in historical inquiries, the letters of the parties concerned in the transactions under examination will be deemed to claim peculiar regard.

If the public and private correspondence of a public man is extant, we may defy the skill of the most consummate intriguer effectually to conceal

truth in matters of fact; for as the brand of duplicity is unfailingly affixed by history to those who have merited the stigma, this very mark becomes an index—making known upon the surface the movements so artfully concealed. But if, notwithstanding his prejudices, and errors, and private interests, a public person deserves, in the common sense of the term, to be called an honest man, then his letters may be assumed as furnishing by far the most significant and infallible of all historical documents.

Such documents being alleged to exist, we have, in the first place, to assure ourselves of their genuineness: and being satisfied on this point, they must be used as piers of support, from which to arch over the continuous structure of history.—Amid the generalities, and the negligencies, and the anachronisms, so often met with in formal narratives, this or that hypothesis in explanation of difficulties may fairly be formed: but all such suppositions must be brought to the test of the existing letters; for a scheme of interpretation which can by no means be reconciled with inevitable inferences from genuine letters, written at the time, cannot for a moment be admitted.

This high importance attached to letters, as historical documents, is not assumed on the supposition that a man in writing a letter, is of course, more veracious than he would be if he were writing a history; for the very reverse may often be the fact; but

it results from the peculiarity of this kind of composition.—A letter is an interlocution between individuals;—for though we hear only one of the speakers explicitly, yet the sentiments, convictions, and common knowledge of the party addressed, are contained, by implication, in the writer's language and allusions. Wherein the writer and the person he addresses differ in opinion—wherein they agree, and what facts are known and acknowledged by both—are, in most cases, sufficiently manifest in the terms of a letter:—the paper contains therefore in fact the testimony of two or of more persons; and on a variety of points (not directly interesting to either party, or *not at that time in debate* between them) this evidence is of that purely spontaneous and incidental kind which carries with it irresistible conviction.

The value of modern European history has been incalculably enhanced by the numberless collections of the letters of statesmen and literary persons that have been at different times brought to light. Ancient history, though not wholly destitute of documents of this sort, possesses only a few examples of the kind. Such are the epistles of Cicero, and those of Pliny; both of inestimable value in ascertaining the public transactions of the times. Had similar memorials been transmitted from the pens of the Grecian statesmen, the historians of their times would stand relieved

almost of the entire responsibility of transmitting to posterity a true picture of the glories of their country. This deficiency is in part supplied by the orations addressed to the people by Lysias, Isocrates, Æschines, and Demosthenes; for in these also, though we may distrust many direct affirmations, we cannot but admit the certainty of a thousand allusions, implying that the events mentioned were matters of notoriety among those whom the orator addressed.

Of all such documents it may be affirmed, that when certainly proved to be genuine, they annihilate the distance of time, and place the men of each succeeding age in immediate connection with their precursors on the theatre of life. It is by these means that the inestimable benefits to be derived from a knowledge of the wisdom and the folly, the virtues and the vices of other men—a knowledge not advantageously to be gathered from our own times merely, are possessed on grounds which leave no room to distrust their practical value.

Carrying in the mind the ascertainable distinction between contemporary and traditionary history—between that which may be demonstrated to be true, and that which may fairly be deemed questionable, it will not be difficult to trace upon the chart of past ages, almost definitely, a line marking out the terra firma of history, within which nothing very important remains

undetermined : and beyond which, very little can be fixed with confidence and precision. If we exclude the narrow track marked from age to age by the few definite points of sacred history, and the truth of which in its earlier portions rests on the proof of the divine authority of the books in which it is contained — this solid ground will appear to be not very widely extended in either of its dimensions. Of the nations of Asia it can hardly be affirmed that there exists any strictly authentic history, except so far as by war or commerce, the people of the East, coming in contact with Europeans, have mingled the affairs of the two continents. In like manner, African history is substantiated only so far as it is closely interwoven with that of Greece or Rome. Authentic Grecian history hardly dates its commencement earlier than the beginning of the sixth century before the Christian era ; nor does it, till long afterwards, spread itself beyond the narrow boundaries of Greece. The Roman history, though it assumes the sonorous tones of arrogant pretension—fitting the policy and insolence of the people, is manifestly liable to more than suspicion. Not only must we retrench, as destitute of sufficient proof, the earlier portions of Roman history ; but many splendid pages of the foreign history of the republic, even in much later periods, ought, in point of authenticity, to be placed upon a level only with the official

publications of governments, which suffer no statements but their own to be circulated.

Yet after all these retrenchments have been made from the apparent dimensions of ancient history, there remains a space and a period within which no signal transactions—extending by their consequences through many years, and affecting the condition of more nations than one—can be imagined to rest under much obscurity. For example:—If we take the map of the Roman empire, we may draw a border, extending to the width of three hundred miles — in some parts less, in others more — around the shores of the Mediterranean Sea ; — the space so marked might safely be termed the domain of authentic history, during a period of a thousand years :—the commencement of this period must, of course, be dated a century or two earlier in the east, than in the west ; but during the mid-years of the term, that is to say, from the age of Alexander till that of Constantine, a noon-day light shines upon the public affairs and social condition of every nation comprehended within the above-mentioned limits.

Compared with the entire mass of human interests and of human affairs, the fragments of information preserved by history are indeed inconsiderable : yet that large volume of facts which is for ever lost from the knowledge of posterity, must be supposed to consist, almost entirely, of

what was private, local, ordinary, and unattended by signal and abiding consequences. Nor can it be imagined that, within the range of authentic history, public events of such a nature as must attract general attention, and such as involved the interests of multitudes, and occupied a course of years, and extended in their effects over several countries, may have taken place, of which events history has given no indication ; and of which no trace, no monument, no record remains.

If a supposition like this be inadmissible, neither can we allow the least probability to one which is nearly its converse—namely, that within the above-named space and period, events such as we have just described, might occur, and that these events should be distinctly and formally recorded by more than one contemporary historian, and alluded to by several uninfluenced writers of the same and the following age—and that they should give occasion to a mass of writings, of which the greater portion are unquestionably genuine, and that yet, notwithstanding this abundance and this variety of materials, it is impracticable to ascertain confidently, either the reality of these events, or the true characters of the prime agents, or the honesty of the writers by whose means we receive the narrative. With records of all kinds in our hands—with an exact and comprehensive knowledge of the times, and the people to which these writings belong—with an

accumulated knowledge of human nature—with all the aids of a perfected science of criticism :— with every means that can be imagined or desired, is it still impossible to determine whether such and such events actually happened, or whether the actors in them were men of common sense and integrity, or knaves and fools? Yet those who profess to think that the truth of Christianity may be fairly questioned, or who attempt to explain admitted facts, on any principle which excludes the belief of the divine origin of the system, must suppose just such a case of inexplicable uncertainty.

The reader has already been reminded that, of all historical documents, no class affords evidence more conclusive and exact than the letters of public persons, or of individuals nearly connected with the events that are the subjects of inquiry. On this principle it might be strongly recommended to those whose convictions have been embarrassed, or who, from inattention to the subject, entertain doubts of the truth of Christianity, to peruse the apostolic epistles with the single intention of carrying in their minds, as they read, the opposite suppositions that may be formed relative to the character of the writers, and the true nature of the events so often alluded to by them. From verse to verse, let the reader bring these suppositions separately to the test of common sense—following out the consequences

of each ;—picturing, in detail, the circumstances of the case, and realizing (as far as the materials permit) the very characters, both of the writers and of the parties they address. Can such a process as this be called improper or impertinent, or not adapted to the discovery of truth, or not conformed to the established usages of historical investigation? We may further ask, can any other line of argument deserve a moment's attention until this has been pursued? Can any vague reasonings, of an abstract kind, claim a hearing while this remains neglected? Or can any one decline to abide by the issue of such an investigation, and at the same time be allowed to profess that he *honestly* doubts the truth of Christianity?

Some specimens of this mode of reading the epistles, examined without favour, simply as historical documents, will be offered to the reader in the following pages. In the inferences deduced from certain passages, two things only will be taken for granted—1st. That human nature has in all ages been essentially the same; and 2d. That the epistles quoted are genuine.* One observation should be premised to our proposed investigation—namely, That as the books of the New Testament plainly profess to affirm the occurrence of miraculous events, a denial of the *possibility* of any such events, or an asser-

* See Note.

tion that *no evidence*, however good it may seem, can be of force enough to prove their reality, is manifestly a begging of the very question in debate, and therefore deserves no reply.*

CHAPTER XI.

SPECIMEN OF HISTORICAL INFERENCES, GATHERED FROM THE APOSTOLICAL EPISTLES.

Every imaginable dissimilarity distinguishes the epistles of Pliny—the Roman Proconsul from those of Peter—the Christian teacher. So utterly unlike are these compositions, that it seems hard to discover a single element, possessed by both, which might serve as a point of comparison, or become the bond even of a momentary association. If we name the one, we do not feel disposed to name the other, till some interval of time has allowed the current of thought to take a new direction.

Yet between these writings, incongruous as they are, there happens to exist a single connecting link, of a purely accidental kind, which, viewing them simply as historical documents, brings them into contact. The reader anticipates

* See Note.

that, among the epistles of Pliny, the one now referred to, is that—so often quoted—which he addressed to Trajan relative to the Christians.*

This distinguished scholar and amiable man having been promoted to the consulate by his friend the emperor, soon afterwards (A. D. 102) as *proprætor*, assumed the government of Bithynia—a province of Asia Minor. Thence it was that he wrote the letter in question to Trajan, requiring advice under circumstances as strange in themselves as they must have been perplexing to a humane magistrate.—No probable reason presents itself which should lead us to make material deductions from the statement of facts contained in this letter. For it is not to be supposed that in an official communication of this class, relating to matters of notoriety, the writer should wish to exaggerate the difficulties that beset him. Yet—to forestal objections—let the language of the letter be interpreted in the lowest sense it will well admit. And then it will appear that when Pliny arrived in Bithynia, a large number—if not a large majority of the people, had long renounced the worship of the gods—were no longer the purchasers of victims, nor the frequenters of the temples. It appears further, that after instituting many inquiries—inquiries edged with the rigour of torture—this intelligent magistrate

* See Note.

could not discover that these atheists—or Christians as they were called, could fairly be charged with any crime known to the Roman law. On the contrary, he affirms his belief—and though reluctant to punish the innocent, he seems by no means prejudiced in favour of the accused;—that they were inoffensive people, more pure and upright than their neighbours, and blame-worthy only on account of their obstinate adherence to their peculiar superstition.

It appears, moreover, from this letter, that though guiltless of crimes, the Christians of this province were then, and had long been exposed to the ill-will of their neighbours, and to many severe inflictions on the part of the magistrates. These then are the external facts of the case, which, viewed apart from other evidence, are far from being such as the ordinary principles of human nature, and the common course of human affairs enable us satisfactorily to explain.

In looking round among contemporary writers for some further notices of this new sect, it is natural, in the first instance, to adduce the evidence of the friend of Pliny—Tacitus, who, incidentally mentions the Christians* in terms which, though they indicate a less exact knowledge of facts, and less candour, accord very well with the description given of the sect by Pliny.—

* Annal. XV. 44. See Note.

At Rome, it seems—‘that common centre of all things foul and shameful,’ as well as in the Asiatic provinces, great numbers of Christians were found; and at Rome also, they were deemed, on account of the ‘pestilent superstition’ to which they adhered, fit objects of the severest punishments.

Having gained from the historian this slender, yet significant corroboration of the facts mentioned by the proconsul, we proceed—confirmed indeed in our belief of the reality of the transactions; but not at all aided in our attempts to explain them—to search for documents of a more ample and exact kind. If such are to be found, serving to throw light upon the motives and practices, not of Christians at large, but upon the principles of these very Bithynian Christians—the evidence they afford will be the more satisfactory. Now there exists a letter of instruction and encouragement addressed by a leader of the sect to the Christians of Bithynia, and the neighbouring provinces, not more than forty years before the time when this correspondence passed between Pliny and Trajan. A letter expressly intended for the instruction and encouragement of these sufferers, will, of course, set forth distinctly those motives and inducements which were found to be of sufficient power to sustain their constancy under trials so extraordinary. We shall not fail therefore, in examining this

letter from the Christian teacher, to gain a clue to the mystery, which, if we possessed the letter of Pliny only, must seem so perplexing. And moreover, unless this ancient document is altogether unlike all other compositions with which it might be compared—unless the writer was master of more art than belongs to man, it surely will not baffle our endeavours to penetrate his real character.

Now before proceeding to a more careful examination of the documents before us, it is natural to take a cursory view of the two letters, in order to ascertain whether there is actually so much *historical conformity* between them as may justify and invite a strict scrutiny of the one, for the purpose of illustrating the other.* In hastily comparing the two, we find the following points of

* The First Epistle of Peter is addressed to persons in Asia whom he describes as “strangers, scattered” throughout the countries he mentions:—or literally—“absent from their native country, and dispersed,” &c. Now this phrase is well known to have been used by the Jews when speaking of those of their nation who resided in foreign countries; and it may be assumed as an indication that it was to Jews, primarily, the letter was addressed; and as proving that the Asiatic Christians were, in part at least, of that race. Pliny does not indeed mention that the persons brought before him were Jews; but his friend Tacitus expressly affirms that the superstition which had pervaded the provinces, and filled Rome, originated in Judæa, and that the sect was composed in part of Jews. We have then, in the first words of the letter, an incidental coincidence which deserves to be noticed.

coincidence:—1. The two writers agree, not only as to the name of the sect; but on the fact that this name was the common ground of accusation against them. Pliny declares that these persons were brought before him “*as Christians*;”^{*}—and that, as Christians, he condemned them. Peter says, “let none of you suffer as a murderer, &c.; but if any suffer *as a Christian*,† let him not be ashamed:”

2. Pliny mentions, incidentally, among the things he had been told, that the Christians were accustomed to meet on a stated day, and “to sing hymns to Christ as to a god.”—Peter speaks of the Founder of Christianity in terms of equivalent import; for he directs the supreme regards of Christians towards “the LORD—Jesus, the Christ;” who, he says, “is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject to him:”—and he says that Christ, “though unseen, is loved” by his disciples, “with a joy unspeakable and full of glory;”—or *abounding in celebrations*.‡ Again, he reminds them that they were “set apart by God to *pronounce the praises* of their Saviour.”

3. The description given of the morals of the Christians by Pliny, accords well with the tone which pervades the epistle of Peter. The pro-consul reports, on the evidence of some persons

^{*} Tamquam Christiani. † ως Χριστιανος. ‡ See Note.

who, to save themselves from death, had renounced their profession, that “the Christians bound themselves by an oath to commit no wickedness—to abstain from thefts, robberies, and adulteries ;—and to be faithful to their promises and engagements ;” and he seems—after all the inquiries he had made—by *putting women to the torture*—to acquiesce in this exculpation of the sufferers from any suspicion of positive crimes : for he could prove nothing against them worse than their obstinacy in adhering to their superstition. Now in turning from the letter of the Roman governor to that of the Jewish teacher, it must be acknowledged—whatever opinion we may form of his personal character, that he displays great earnestness, and we may surely add, a great force of simple and pathetic eloquence, in urging the Christians to the practice of every personal and social virtue ; and in warning them against the very vices which, as Pliny affirms, they abjured in assuming the Christian profession :—for example—“As obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the vices you practised formerly in ignorance ; but, as he who called you is pure, so be you pure in the whole of your behaviour.”—“Lay aside all malice, and fraud, and hypocrisy, and envy, and evil speaking.”—“Abstain from sensual indulgences, which are inimical to the soul,” (or life.)—“Having a good conscience, that on the very occasion when they

calumniate you as evil-doers, they may be confounded in witnessing your good behaviour as Christians.”—“Let it suffice, that in past years you acted as they do, who now wonder that you refuse to pursue with them the same course of debaucheries.”—“Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as a mischievous person, or as a busy body.” Then follow particular injunctions on all the leading duties of social life. So far as such exhortations as these were efficacious, they would produce just those manners which, as Pliny believed, actually prevailed among the Christians.

4. In what relates to the sufferings of the Christians—as such, Pliny and Peter perfectly agree; the former distinctly affirming, what the latter assumes, as a matter of course was then taking place, and likely to continue:—for instance, Pliny begins his letter by saying that “he had never had the fortune to be present at any examination of Christians” before he came into the province of Bithynia; plainly intimating that the examination of Christians before the tribunals was an ordinary circumstance, which he *might* have witnessed in other parts of the Roman Empire, where he had resided, as in Italy, Syria, &c. Conformably with this intimation, we find the Christian teacher, fearing lest his friends in Asia Minor should be disheartened by supposing that they were the only sufferers, or greater suf-

ferers than others who made the same profession, exhorts them “not to deem the fiery trial with which they were proved, *strange*, as if extraordinary ills had befallen them;” and he entreats them to be “steadfast in the faith—knowing that the very same sufferings were endured by their brethren throughout the world.” As to the reality, the frequency, and the rigour of these sufferings, the proconsul affirms quite as much as the Christian teacher assumes. “Uncertain whether he ought to inflict punishments, without distinction, upon the young and the old, the tender and the robust;”—his course hitherto had been “to examine the persons brought before him, menacing them with punishment, and if they persisted in the profession of being Christians, *he ordered them to be executed.*” Some, “being Roman citizens, he had reserved to be sent to the Imperial Tribunal.”—“Two women, who were deaconesses, he had thought it necessary to examine by torture:” yet he had not extorted from them the confession of any thing worse than “an excessive superstition.” From these expressions it is evident that, not merely a few individuals—the leaders of the sect, or those whose enthusiasm attracted most notice, were exposed to suffer: but that all indiscriminately who would not renounce their religion, were liable to condemnation; and that many—the young as well as the old—women as well as men,

actually underwent torture or death. Now this is nothing more than what is implied throughout the epistle of Peter.—Suffering for conscience sake is the principal subject of the letter.—The writer seems to take it for granted that the disciples of Christ, without distinction, were everywhere exposed to persecutions; and so far from attempting to soothe the fears of nature by holding out a hope that the appalling—the “fiery trial” would be of short continuance—that a relenting on the part of the Emperor towards their innocent subjects might be anticipated, he exhorts them to “arm themselves”—not with the sword of self-defence, but with “the mind that was in Christ Jesus;” and plainly intimates that an increase, rather than a cessation of their sufferings was to be looked for,—“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God.”

This cursory comparison of the two letters affords as fair and full an agreement both in the principal facts, and in smaller particulars, as we can well expect to find. Nor can we doubt that this agreement between the assertions and allusions of writers, so utterly unconnected, is founded upon the reality of the events to which both refer. The assertions of either of them *alone* would justly command the confidence of all candid and intelligent persons; for both possess, in the fullest manner, every proper evidence of genuineness and authenticity. But when they thus coincide, his-

torical evidence reaches its highest point of certainty. What remains then is to dissipate, if possible, the mystery which, at first sight, hangs over these extraordinary facts, and to discover in what way the known principles of human nature may be reconciled with a course of conduct such as the imagination shudders to realize—adhered to by multitudes as sensitive and as frail as ourselves.

If the above-mentioned letter of Pliny to Trajan, together with the passage referred to in Tacitus, were the sole existing memorials of the sufferings of the Christians, it would seem a hopeless endeavour satisfactorily to explain the facts they speak of; for no recorded instances of fanatical self-devotion wear a similar appearance. Let it be affirmed that the Christians of Bithynia were deluded by groundless confidences, and that their teachers were the authors of this delusion;—this at least is certain—that they must have been in a state of extraordinary excitement:—and this excitement must have had some intelligible cause or motive. We may be assured, then, that both the true nature of the excitement, and the cause of it, must be discoverable in a hortatory address, sent by a teacher to the disciples under the pressure of their sufferings.

Though not of the most frequent occurrence, yet neither are fanatical excesses so rare as that their proper characteristics should be un-

known. Nor is there any peculiar difficulty either in defining the elements, or in describing the appearances of that state of mind to which the term fanaticism belongs. The primary ingredient of this vice is enthusiasm, which, as connected with the religious emotions, may be termed a passionate and unreasoning expectation of supernal benefits. Enthusiasm, in its simple state, is a mild disorder of the imagination. But to this element, almost innoxious if alone, fanaticism adds a mixture of the malignant passions :—the excitement, thus sharpened and inflamed by the poison of hatred, becomes in the highest degree dangerous to the subject of it, and mischievous to society. Enthusiasm is an error—fanaticism a vice : the one produces follies—the other, crimes. Armed with power, fanaticism snatches at the sword, the brand, the rack.—Oppressed and deprived of the means of active harm, the same passion inspires an iron fortitude in the endurance of self-inflicted torments ; or a brazen contumacy in contemning the tortures inflicted by another. The same prison-court, or the same hall of justice, has not seldom exhibited, at once, both the phases of fanaticism.—There sits one fanatic on the judgment-seat ! and there writhes another fanatic on the rack !

But here surely we have need of caution ; for if charity demands it to be granted that, under some thick mental error there may have been

persecutors who were not fanatics : — for example, Pliny—Trajan—Antoninus—much rather must we admit that *all* sufferers under persecution have not merited that designation. And if, on the one hand, the natural indignation we feel towards men who inflict cruel wrongs, may impel us, in haste, to brand every one as a fanatical persecutor who has acted such a part; on the other hand, the dictate of compassion should make us peculiarly careful that we do not load the memory of the oppressed with a stigma they did not deserve. Indeed a common measure of candour and discrimination will save us from the hazard of committing so great a wrong. For the tone and gesture of the real fanatic—the motives with which he arms his courage—the taunts he flings at his tormentors—his sullenness, or the flaming torrent of his indignant eloquence; all set forth, without doubt, the true source and quality of the excitement under which he sustains a more than human part. The indications of the vice with which he is infected will show themselves in every word, in every look ;—for in every word—in every look there will be, at once, an element of extravagance, and an element of malignity.

To charge fanaticism then upon sufferers for conscience' sake, when the evidence upon which we judge contains no indication of extravagance, no spot or stain of malignity, is, shall we merely

say, an affront to every principle of just reasoning;—is it not itself the symptom of a fanaticism of the most envenomed kind? Whoever is forward to fling this term of reproach upon those who have been the victims of persecution, wants, we may be assured, only a fair occasion to signalize himself in the company of Nero, of Domitian, and of Gallienus.

Now then let us return to the suffering Christians of Bithynia. The letter of Pliny throws little or no light upon the motives or hopes which sustained them under torture and death; nor does it explicitly describe the temper they displayed at the tribunal, or when in the hands of the executioner; yet from the absence of any charge of insolence, or violence, or railing, advanced against them, it might fairly, and in candour it must be inferred, that they did *not* exhibit the symptoms of fanatical excitement. One thing however may be certainly concluded from the facts mentioned by the Proconsul, namely—That, as women and men—young persons and adults—the infirm and the robust, were found willing rather to endure and to die, than to renounce their faith—the motives common to them all must have been of a palpable and intelligible kind. No mere abstractions, no superlative theories, fit to inflame a few exalted minds, can be imagined to have wrought so powerfully on the convictions of the multitude. And yet these women, children, and infirm persons must have

been fully and firmly persuaded that it was better for them to suffer and to die than to deny the name of Christ.

We are compelled then to seek the light we need from some other quarter. Peter does indeed hold out a bright hope before the Christians to whom he writes; but it is not the hope of a speedy revolution which should give them earthly power, wealth and pleasures; nor is it the hope of a gaudily painted paradise, furnished with gay and soft delights.—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his abundant mercy, has, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, renewed us to a lively hope of an inheritance *uncorrupted, undefiled*, and unfading, which is reserved in the heavens for us.” Instead of expatiating, in oriental style, upon the glories of this heavenly inheritance, the writer hastens on to treat of subjects more needful, though less exciting; and only here and there, in a single phrase, does he glance at “the glory that shall be revealed:”—never does he permit such a reference to be disjoined from the idea of the favour of God; nor this idea of the divine favour to be separated from that purity of heart and life upon which he so strenuously insists.—“As he who has called you (to this hope) is holy; so be ye also holy.”

It is manifest that the principal object of the writer is not to inflame the minds of the disciples

with expectations of an animating kind ; for he only alludes, in passing, to topics of this class. We find then, in this letter, a motive which, if it did indeed take possession of the mind, was adequate to produce the effects that actually followed. For here is the hope of another and an endless life, a life of purity, springing from the presence and favour of the one living, true, and holy God. But is this hope the characteristic element of enthusiasm ? or if it be, is it wrought up and urged in the style proper to an enthusiast, addressing enthusiasts ? where in this epistle is there the touch of extravagance ? Or where do we discover that dash of malignity—that envenomed fang of misanthropy, which is the proper indication of fanaticism ? With the serenity of one who feels no animosity, whose language is pointed by no acrimony, whose words burn with no sense of injuries, Peter refers, when his subject leads him to do so, to the rejection of the Gospel by them “who were disobedient.” The injurious conduct of persecutors he veils under a mild phrase, containing in it a tacit apology ;—“the *ignorance* of foolish men.” Upon the former companions of the Christians when they pursued, like others, a course of licentiousness he passes no judgment in his own person. “They shall,” he says, “give an account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.” In alluding to the punishment of the wicked it is remarkable that Peter employs none of those

designations which, on such occasions so readily occur to the mind of one whose spirit is embittered with a sense of wrongs : he does not say—our enemies—our persecutors—your barbarous judges—your ferocious neighbours,” shall presently suffer the punishment their crimes call for. It is the “ungodly,” “the disobedient,” “the sinner,” who have to look for judgment. General phrases like these never content the murky fanatic when he denounces vengeance on his enemies.

“Oppression makes a wise man mad ;” and the instances are rare in which the endurance of unmerited wrongs, inflicted in contempt of every principle of law and humanity, has not provoked from the sufferers some murmurs that might be interpreted to contain a menace of sedition. The feeling may be cloaked ; but it will be seen to lurk in some phrase of gloomy import. Not such is the language of Peter.—“Submit yourselves to every human appointment for the Lord’s sake ;—whether to the king as supreme, or to governors who are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers. Honour all, love the brethren ; fear God ; honour the king : servants be obedient to your masters, with all fear ; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward : for this is praiseworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.” Instead of that sullenness which soothes the pride of those who are loaded with undeserved reproach, the writer of this letter

exhorts the Christians to be "always ready to give an answer, with meekness and fear, to every man who might ask a reason of the hope they entertained."

Besides these explicit instructions, applicable to particular occasions, Peter recommends, by every persuasion, the mild virtues;—love, meekness, brotherly kindness, hospitality, pity, courteousness;—and dissuades from revilings and malice. And is this the tone of a fanatic? But fanaticism sometimes assumes (though not so often in times of persecution) a milder form. Sometimes it shows itself only in personal austerity, in voluntary mortifications and inflictions, in a contemptuous disregard of the common enjoyments of life;—and this peculiar form of the vice is not seldom indicated by a tendency to revile acrimoniously those who are less austere. Was then Peter a fanatic of this milder class? Let us hear him:—"Ye are called to inherit a blessing:—for he that *will love life*, and *see good days*, let him restrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him avoid evil, and do good, let him seek peace, and pursue it."

Pliny says that he had examined two women, deaconesses, by torture. This might suggest the idea that the Christian women were encouraged to act an obtrusive part, or to display more zeal than modesty:—a fanatical spirit is not unlikely to produce effects of this sort. But no such

conduct or temper is recommended by Peter—
 “Wives be in subjection to your own husbands,
 that if any obey not the word they may, without
 the word, be won by the behaviour of the wives;
 while they observe your pure manners, *ruled by
 diffidence.*” One should also expect to find in a
 sect infected with fanaticism, that its leaders
 would not fail to improve the advantage (always
 put into the hands of those who govern in times
 of trouble) to enhance their own influence, and to
 indemnify themselves for the hazards they incur
 by claiming extraordinary aids. But such was
 not the course of conduct encouraged by Peter
 when he addresses the rulers of the society:—
 “Feed the flock of God as much as is in your
 power; exercising the office of bishops not by
 compulsion, but willingly; not for the sake of
 gains; but of a ready mind:—Neither as exert-
 ing a lordly power over the heritage: but be
 patterns to the flock.”

To affirm then that the extraordinary excite-
 ment which sustained the Christians of Bithynia
 under the persecutions to which they were ex-
 posed was enthusiastical or fanatical would be
 not only an assertion without foundation, but a
 calumny, directly contradicted by every word of
 evidence we possess. Yet there still remains a
 difficulty to be solved, which neither the letter of
 Pliny, nor even that of Peter, enables us to dis-
 sipate. If the Christian sufferers, far from being

half mad enthusiasts, or inflamed fanatics, were distinguished by the meekness, mildness, and sobriety of their temper and conduct, whence came this mighty persuasion of the truth of their religion which gave to many of them a fortitude so supernatural? For the solution of this question we must look beyond the documents now before us. Meanwhile, and supposing that an explanation entirely satisfactory, of the facts hitherto mentioned could not be obtained, a bold and urgent challenge may be offered to all candid persons, to read the First Epistle of Peter, and to abide by the dictate of conscience when it is asked if this letter does not exhibit a wisdom and a goodness which place it at an infinite distance above all reasonable suspicion of fraud or imposture?

CHAPTER XII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

The Christians of the adjoining province of Galatia, were addressed in common with those of Bithynia by Peter. About twelve years before the date of the first of his epistles, these same Galatian Christians had been written to by Paul, in a tone and style strikingly different.—Both letters are peculiarly characteristic of the temper,

education, and habits of the writers.—The one fervent; the other ardent: the one exhibiting that inartificial progression of thought, which is natural to a mind—copious in ideas, and unembarrassed in language; but not skilled by literary habits in the arts of composition:—the other, displaying all the variety, and all the aptness, and the address of an accomplished and richly furnished understanding—of an understanding excited by an intensity of feeling. If, in the epistles of Peter, there is the lofty simplicity of a lowly and devout mind, carrying the writer above the sphere of passing events, and leading him to be brief in his references to persons, places, and lesser incidents;—in those of Paul every thing is concrete—personal—local—exact:—there is all that precise collocation of phrases and allusions to the particular proprieties of the occasion on which he was writing, which is characteristic of an active, energetic, and cultivated mind:—nothing is vague—nothing unfixed: each arrow has its aim:—if Paul contended in the Christian warfare, “not as one who beateth the air;”—so he writes not as one who brandishes a pen without a specific object. He ever labours to produce a definite and premeditated effect upon the minds of such and such individuals, with whose circumstances, feelings, prejudices, faults, and virtues, he is accurately acquainted, and which, amid all the heat of his feelings, and the rapidity of

his eloquence, he never for a moment forgets:—again and again inserting some allusion—some abrupt, but significant phrase, which at once grapples his argument upon the personal feelings of those to whom he writes, and proves that he is himself never unmindful of their particular welfare.

Compositions like these then, in which every sentence contains a fresh and bright reflection from the surrounding scene, every form a sharp and full impression from reality, are fraught with the very soul of history: facts speak in every line. Better, incomparably better, than any abstract narrative, or formal statement, are these living and spontaneous products of a mind which, by its own exact form, and luminous polish, throws off a moving image of every object around it. There can therefore be no place left, no indulgence given to vague hypotheses relative to the true nature of Christianity, or the circumstances which attended its first promulgation, while the letters of Paul are in existence. Away with specious surmises—with bungling theories—with suppositions no man can realize or adjust to facts.—We have documents, replete with information of the most exact kind in our hands. Let those who have neither common sense to interpret common phrases, nor patience to pursue the simplest chain of reasoning, nor honesty to yield to inevitable inferences, abstain from the argu-

ment, and please themselves in their own world—the world of dreams and error.*

The epistle to the Galatian churches is manifestly addressed chiefly, if not solely, to those converts who had been reclaimed from the heathen worship :—"Then," says Paul, "when ye knew not God, ye did service to them—ye were the slaves of them, which by nature are no gods:" and subsequently, his argument establishes the rights and privileges of those who once had no part in the covenant made with the father of the faithful. Yet, as is equally evident, there were, in these Galatian churches, not a few Jews, professing Christianity; and apparently, these Jews, or some of them, assumed and exercised the office of teachers. These persons, though too fully convinced of the truth of the religion they professed, to renounce it, wished, so far to accommodate the system to the intolerant prejudices of their nation, as might soothe and allay that hot animosity which was every where the exciting cause of persecutions. It is evident, both from the narrative of Luke, and from many passages in the epistles of Paul, that it was in almost every instance the opposing Jews who raised tumults—instigated the heathen populace, and brought the Christian teachers before the Roman governors. If then the Jews could by

* See Note.

compliances have been flattered into silence, there seemed reason to believe that the fire of persecution would soon die away.

The Jewish teachers had succeeded in bringing over the Galatian Christians to adopt many of these compromising practices, which “took away the offence of the cross.” Paul, then at Ephesus or Corinth, being informed of this dereliction of what he deemed to be essential to Christianity, on the part of his late converts, and of this cowardly shrinking from those sufferings which all Christians were called to sustain, wrote to them in terms of warm exhortation and rebuke.

The facts then are these:—Within twenty, or five-and-twenty years after the death of Christ, and while multitudes of persons were still living in Galilee and Judæa, who had listened to his preaching, and were acquainted with the extraordinary circumstances which attended his ministry, there were Jews, at no great distance from Palestine, and holding—according to the habits of that people—frequent intercourse with their mother-country, who, though they shrunk from persecution, yet could not renounce Christianity:—chilled by their fears, and destitute of a genuine feeling, and closely wrapped in the repulsive prejudices of their nation, they yet consorted with loathed Gentiles, and called themselves by the scorned name of Christians.

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It is these Jewish malignants—his personal adversaries—(for they sought to supplant his influence, and to destroy his authority) whom Paul, from a distance, where he could not reply to their insinuations—defies. And between them and himself he calls in the Gentile converts to be judges—judges of the validity of his authority, and of their own folly. Nor does he summon them to be umpires in the controversy by any courting phrases. Instead of winning them back to his interests by blandishments, he accosts them in the tones of an angry parent who, returning to his home, finds his family in disorder. Indeed if we were not to attribute a parental feeling of this kind to the writer, we must admit that he uses language approaching to contumely and scorn—“O foolish Galatians—devoid of understanding—who has bewitched you into this departure from the truth?”—“I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”

An appeal like this, addressed to the multitude, composing societies in several cities of a province—to persons who were already won by the writer's adversaries, was surely bold enough, if he had known that inquiry, urged by animosity, might bring to light any tricks practised upon the credulity of the people. But perhaps in Galatia, Paul had made no pretensions which could make him liable to exposure. To what then does he appeal, when, after almost tauntingly

he had reminded the Galatians of the persecutions they had already endured, which now seemed to have been in vain, he goes on to ask — “He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and *worketh miracles* among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” — Are the miracles now wrought among you, performed in confirmation of this new doctrine of legal observances, or in support of the preaching of justification by faith? With what appearance of reason could this pointed challenge have been made if no miracles were then wrought among the Galatians? — Or with what safety, if these miracles were liable to suspicion or to exposure?

One cannot but remark at once the boldness and the brevity of this allusion to the miraculous interpositions which, as Paul affirms, still took place in support of the Gospel. There are two courses, either of which might seem natural on the supposition that these miracles were not real. — The one is, that this absent teacher, on an occasion when he was urging a controversy with those over whose minds he had lost almost all his first influence, would carefully avoid every allusion to the pretended miracles; lest he should provoke some fatal disclosures. The other course, probable on this supposition, is that he would, on such an occasion, expatiate at length, and in magnificent terms, upon the miracles wrought

by himself, when he first preached the Gospel in Galatia. But instead of adopting either of these modes—instead of mentioning his *own miracles*, he inserts in the midst of the most pungent passage of the whole epistle, this hasty, but explicit reference to the miracles still wrought among the Galatians themselves.

Far from retreating from the position of authority he had assumed, the writer expresses his will that those who troubled the Galatian churches should be “cut off”—expelled from the societies. Having thus boldly rebuked, and warmly upbraided the Galatians: and reasoned with them on the futility of the opinions which they had been beguiled to adopt, Paul returns to the tone of calm exhortation on the great and invariable points of morality: and giving a comprehensive catalogue of vices and of graces, he subjoins the most solemn sanctions.—This letter, in which his apostolical authority was in question, he had—contrary to his ordinary custom—“written with his own hand;” and in concluding, he pathetically appeals from the annoyance of his personal adversaries, to the scars he had received in the discharge of his ministry;—“Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I sustain in my body the stigmas of the Lord Jesus.”

In comparing this epistle of Paul with that of Peter, addressed to the same parties, we find

in the one, what was wanting in the other, for the purpose of rendering intelligible that conduct on the part of the Christians which Pliny describes.—It appears that in Galatia—and if there, elsewhere—miraculous interpositions in confirmation of Christianity were continually taking place. It is not then surprising that, without the heat and excitement of fanaticism, many—the young, the old, the feeble, and the timid, should choose rather to die than to abandon a bright hope which they knew by infallible tokens to be from God.

These three letters—that of the learned Cilician Jew—that of the Galilean fisherman, and that of the Roman magistrate may be taken as furnishing together—better than a history of Christianity in Asia Minor—a series of documents from which we are to draw our own inferences—and these inferences include an immediate proof of the truth of the religion.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

It would be hard to find among all the remains of ancient literature any compositions, of equal

length, more richly fraught with incidental and informal allusions to passing events, and to personal interests, than the two epistles of Paul to the Corinthians. Almost every sentence in these letters, whether it contains a general sentiment, or some particular affirmation, has a specific character, proper at once to the writer and to the persons addressed. And every paragraph depicts the usages, dispositions, and actual condition of the new sect. These epistles to the Corinthians, if compared with that to the Romans, or with that to the Hebrews, claim a decided preference when considered as *historical documents* ; for though the latter are by no means destitute of many points of contact with surrounding facts, the former are replete in every part with *individualities* of this kind.

There is no difficulty, while perusing these two letters, in realizing the characters and the circumstances that are mentioned ; and though some of these circumstances are extraordinary, yet they are so intimately woven with the common material of human nature, and the writer's style is so rife with genuine feeling, that even the marvellous seems natural ;—the facts indeed are unusual ; but in the narration of them there is nothing strange.

At Corinth, as well as in Galatia, disorders had quickly arisen among the Christian converts : and a party, headed by Jewish teachers, had been

formed in avowed opposition to the authority of Paul. And besides the evils naturally attendant upon the prevalence of a sectarian spirit, some flagrant violations of that purity of manners which peculiarly belonged to the Christian profession, had taken place and been connived at in the society. A teacher so zealous as Paul, could not support these dishonours of the cause to which his life was devoted :—his first letter therefore to the Corinthians, is one of remonstrance, rebuke, and strenuous argumentation. One improper practice or false opinion after another, is rephended and refuted, with the utmost freedom, and in a high tone of personal independence and official authority. There is no flattery of his partizans, no fear of his adversaries, no mincing of his opinions. These urgent admonitions seem to have produced the intended effect; and the second letter, in which there is little of argument, breathes a spirit of restored confidence and affection. •

This is not the place in which to affirm that Paul was indeed a good and sincere, as well as an intelligent man; but there is no *petition of the question* in saying that, judging only from these letters, he *seems* to be such. For the natural, proper, and invariable indications of a fervent, honest, affectionate, and virtuously intrepid mind, are as distinctly prominent in these letters, as are the proofs of the writer's intellectual endowments, and educational peculiarities. For as it is impossible

to doubt, especially in reading the Greek original, that the writer was a Jew—a man of good education, and acquainted with secular affairs ;—or that he possessed acuteness of judgment, and fluency and vigour of style ; so likewise, his moral qualities force themselves upon the confidence of every reader who is at all susceptible of the sympathies of virtue. If therefore no principles are admitted on this occasion except those which guide our feelings and judgment in ordinary instances, then we shall as certainly, as spontaneously, conclude that Paul was a good man, as we do that Pliny was such. But whatever opinion may be formed of this writer's character, our present business is to inquire what inferences are unavoidably deduced from some of the many allusions he makes to passing events.

Neither of these epistles furnishes the means of ascertaining what number of persons professed Christianity at Corinth, at the time when the society was written to by Paul. It may however be inferred (1 Cor. xiv. 23.) that they were not so numerous as to prevent their assembling “in one place.” And yet, as they were divided into several parties, it is not probable that they were very few. Indeed it seems, throughout the epistles, to be intimated that there was a rather numerous congregation. The Corinthian Christians appear also to have been less exposed to persecution than their brethren in other cities ;—an im-

munity for which, probably, they were indebted to the good sense of the pro-consul of Achaia. (Acts xviii. 14.) They therefore found it practicable to assemble in a building open to the public, and where the presence of casual hearers was not unfrequent.

We are not left to conjecture what was the quality and external condition of the majority of the Corinthian Christians; for on this subject the evidence of Paul is sufficiently explicit; and on such a point, surely, if on any, it may be admitted without suspicion. Almost in the first sentences of the epistle occurs the following not very flattering appeal. We may picture the public reading of this passage, against which no one could look round and make exception.—“You perceive, my friends, to what sort of society you are called :—“You see that there are not (among you) many of the worldly wise—not many of the powerful—not many of the well-born. But that God has chosen those who, in the world’s esteem, are fools, to put to shame the wise; and the feeble, to confound the strong. Yes, and the ignoble, and the contemned, has God chosen, and things of nought, to abolish things that are : in order that no place may be left for human boasting in His presence.”

Upon this significant appeal it is natural to remark, in the first place, that a fair inference from the manner of it justifies the presumption that

there *were* in the society a *few* individuals, wise and noble in the world's esteem, who, from whatever motives, reconciled themselves to an incongruous association with slaves and artizans. In the second place it may be remarked, that if the mass of these Christians were persons of mean and servile condition—uneducated, and uninfluenced by that regard to decorum which so strongly restrains the wealthy and the learned, then, if the excitement under which they were brought together, were supposed to have been of a fanatical kind, it is incredible that they could be at all accessible to such reasonings, and to that style of persuasion which the epistle contains; or indeed that *such* persons should actually have been reclaimed by any means to good order and right feeling.

Paul, as it seems, had his zealous partizans at Corinth; yet, renouncing whatever advantage he might derive from their partiality, he strenuously condemns any such prejudice in favour of one teacher, as implied ill-will towards another. (1 Cor. iv. 6.) And he checks the disposition to exaggerate the merit or talents of teachers, by referring all distinguishing endowments to the will of Him to whom alone praise should be rendered. This surely is not the language of the leader of a sect—anxious to exalt the influence of those who governed, and solicitous especially to maintain and extend his personal authority. If

the writer felt any such selfish motives, certainly he does not betray the fears of an intriguer when he puts all to the hazard by administering a sharp rebuke of the laxity of the Corinthians in permitting an immoral member to remain in their communion. In a tone of absolute authority, yet mingled with tenderness, and devoid of arrogance, he commands them to expel the offender ; and at the same time admonishes them to mourn their own fault in having so long been forgetful of the known principles of their profession.

But an act of excommunication is, in its nature, tickling both to pride and malignity ; and likely to engender a feeling which may greatly mar the social sentiments. Lest therefore this exclusion of an offending member should call up a spirit of sour and self-righteous seclusion from those who were not of their communion, Paul expressly cautions these Christians against drawing such a consequence from his injunctions.—“ If any one of *your society*,” says he, “ be an immoral person, “ keep no company with him ; but as to others, “ you must go out of the world if you would with- “ draw from all such. And what have I to do to “ condemn those who are without :—those who are “ without, God judges.” Thus, while he sustains the great sanctions of universal morality, he cuts off occasion from acrimonious or censorious spirits.

Under the next head of reproof, Paul condemns, in a style of sarcastic severity, the litigious temper

and practices in the indulgence of which the Corinthian Christians had forgotten the most obvious precepts of their religion, and had become indifferent to its credit before the world. After pointing out the course which common sense as well as Christian principles suggested for the avoidance of pecuniary contestations, he endeavours to awaken the slumbering conscience by a peculiarly emphatic and solemn denunciation, conjoined with an appeal to their personal feelings. — “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not possess a part in the kingdom of God : —and such were some of you ;—but ye are “washed.” Paul then neither feared to remind some of this society that they had once followed the most flagitious courses ; nor did he hesitate to affirm that, though many disorders and grave abuses had arisen among them, a real and ostensible reformation had attended their conversion to Christianity.

No reader of these epistles can fail to observe that, whenever the writer discusses a seemingly doubtful question of manners or morals, his decision inclines to the side which plain good sense approves, even though in opposition to the strongest of his national prejudices. Is it a Jew—a Pharisee, whom we hear saying,—“Circumcision is nothing?” Yet this renunciation of his earliest and firmest opinions did not result from a mere transition of his zeal from one system of forms to

taining a transient liberty from such associated ideas, the following paraphrastic version is offered to the reader. Those parts of the apostle's argument that are irrelevant to our present purpose, are omitted or condensed.

1 Cor. xii. "I am unwilling, my friends, that
 "you should be in error on the subject of intellec-
 "tual (endowments.) You remember that *you*
 "(I speak not now to Jews) when you were wor-
 "shippers of speechless images, followed (your
 "teachers) which way soever you were led. I
 "must therefore remind you that (now you are to
 "judge for yourselves on the principle that) no
 "(instructor) can be under the guidance of the
 "Divine Spirit, who calumniates Jesus: and on
 "the other hand, that no man can make a (con-
 "sistent) profession that Jesus is Lord, without
 "the aid of the same Spirit.

"(This being premised, lest you should be
 "seduced by any who may exhibit extraordinary
 "powers, I go on to say that) though there is a
 "diversity of endowments, they all proceed from
 "the same Spirit; and though a diversity of
 "functions, the same Lord presides over all; and
 "though there be a diversity of operations, it is
 "the same God who performs all in all. But
 "upon each individual is bestowed a special
 "exhibition of that same Spirit, for some purpose
 "of utility. Thus, for example, the same Spirit
 "confers upon one, wisdom of discourse; upon

which would serve as a universal guide on each particular occasion.—“We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but the One.”—Why had none of the sages of Greece, with equal perspicuity, and with the same boldness, advanced and defended a conclusion so simple, so salutary, and so consonant to right reason? Without thinking a parade of reasoning necessary to support his affirmation, he proceeds to illustrate his particular position:—“Yet all have not this knowledge.” He argues therefore that Christians, aware of the ignorance of others, should be careful lest, by a seeming indifference, they should embolden the compliances of weak and undecided persons. “Food does not indeed recommend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better; nor if we eat not are we, in his sight, the worse:—yet must Christians take care lest this power (which knowledge confers) should become a stumbling block in the path of the weak.”

Paul therefore instructs Christians, while they were to avoid compliances which might be mistaken by others for concessions in favour of idolatry, to avoid all kinds of scrupulosity and punctiliousness. Nor does he sanction their secluding themselves from the society of their neighbours on pretence of religion. “Whatever is sold in the shambles eat, asking no question for conscience sake;—for the earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof. If any of the unbe-

- “lievers invite you (to a feast) and you wish to
 “go, eat whatever is placed before you, making
 “no distinction on account of conscience. But if
 “any one say to you, ‘This is part of the victim,’
 “eat it not, both for your host’s sake, and for
 “conscience;—for the earth is the Lord’s, and
 “the fulness thereof.” A more admirable in-
 stance than this will not easily be found of accu-
 racy of judgment without casuistical refinements;
 or of firmness without rigidity; or of a devout
 regard to the honour of God, conjoined with a
 bland and unaffected good-will towards man.

In these several articles of advice there appears nothing of the zealot, nothing of the formalist. If we ask the source of so much healthy good sense—of this piety without stiffness, without hypocrisy, without laxity, without extravagance, shall we be told that it was acquired in the school of the Pharisees, or that it was learned from the Sadducees, or borrowed from the Herodians? Or does it betray the style of the porch, or of the academy? No! This practical and liberal wisdom, which we are *now* able to appreciate, was then new to mankind;—nor are there any writings of older date than the Gospels and Epistles, in which it may be found.*

The middle portion of this Epistle (chapters 12, 13, 14,) challenges peculiar attention. And if the common principles of reasoning, and the

* See Note.

standing rules of criticism cannot so be brought to bear upon it as shall extort from the words their true import, and from the record its real value, then indeed the serious study of any ancient writings must seem an idle labour:—and it were as well to employ our waking hours in recovering the dreams of the night, as in the fruitless toil of exploring the monuments of antiquity. It was surely some other feeling than a commendable modesty which prompted the reply of the Pharisees to that inquiry—“The baptism of John, whence was it—from heaven or of men?” “*We cannot tell whence it was.*” Nor can it readily be granted that a pure diffidence—an amiable intellectual lowliness, actuates those who will turn from the passage now before us and say,—“We cannot understand it—we cannot decide whether this is the language of truth, or of knavery.”

Passages which, by reiterated perusal, have become too familiar to be understood in their native sense, and which are too thickly set with associated ideas to be fairly seen in their naked meaning, may very advantageously be rendered (for a moment) into the dialect of colloquial intercourse. Not as if such a translation were the true and the best rendering of the words; but merely that it conveys to the mind the substance of the thought, apart from those habitual notions of a religious kind which obscure the simply historical significance of the words. With the view of ob-

taining a transient liberty from such associated ideas, the following paraphrastic version is offered to the reader. Those parts of the apostle's argument that are irrelevant to our present purpose, are omitted or condensed.

1 Cor. xii. "I am unwilling, my friends, that
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 "Divine Spirit, who calumniates Jesus: and on
 "the other hand, that no man can make a (con-
 "sistent) profession that Jesus is Lord, without
 "the aid of the same Spirit.

"(This being premised, lest you should be
 "seduced by any who may exhibit extraordinary
 "powers, I go on to say that) though there is a
 "diversity of endowments, they all proceed from
 "the same Spirit; and though a diversity of
 "functions, the same Lord presides over all; and
 "though there be a diversity of operations, it is
 "the same God who performs all in all. But
 "upon each individual is bestowed a special
 "exhibition of that same Spirit, for some purpose
 "of utility. Thus, for example, the same Spirit
 "confers upon one, wisdom of discourse; upon

“another, knowledge ; upon another, confidence ;
 “upon another, the endowment of healing di-
 “seases.—To one, the same Spirit gives energies
 “for powerful works ; to another the faculty of
 “preaching (or predicting) to another, the dis-
 “crimination of characters ; to another, different
 “languages ; and to another, the interpretation of
 “languages.

“Now all these endowments are effected in
 “those who receive them by the very same
 “Spirit, apportioning each to each, at his plea-
 “sure. And in like manner, as the human body,
 “though consisting of many members, is still one ;
 “so is it in a society of Christians. For whether
 “we be Jews or Greeks—slaves or free persons,
 “we all become by baptism—as it were—one
 “body ; and all imbibe the same spirit. And as
 “in the human body, each member has need of
 “the others—the eye of the ear, and the hand
 “of the foot ;—so in our societies there is a real
 “dependance of each upon all, and of all upon
 “each :—there ought therefore to be a sympathy
 “and union throughout the community. For
 “you are, if I may so speak, the body of Christ,
 “each one being but a member or organ of the
 “whole.

“In this divine constitution of the christian
 “community, there are various degrees ; for
 “example.—In the first place stand those who
 “were commissioned (by Christ to establish his

“religion.) In the second place, preachers (or
 “the bearers of immediate communications from
 “Heaven.) In the third (ordinary) teachers.
 “Then those who exercise mighty energies;
 “then endowments for healing diseases; then
 “those who aid (in managing the affairs of the
 “society) or who direct (the movements of others.)
 “Now could all be (specially) commissioned?
 “Could all receive peculiar communications?
 “Ought all to be teachers? Should all possess
 “mighty powers; or all be able to heal diseases,
 “or all speak various languages, or all interpret
 “languages?—You affect the most eminent en-
 “dowments. But I have to display to you a
 “path (to honour) still more worthy.”

The principal intention of the writer in this passage is very obvious:—it is not to enhance or magnify the endowments which were exercised in the Christian church that he thus enumerates them; but rather, by pointing to the source of every gift, and by insisting upon the end for which such gifts were bestowed, he aims to promote among the Christians a feeling of devout humility, and to convince them of the absurdity of that vain-glorious ambition which would render these endowments the sources of disorder and division, rather than of edification. He then proceeds (chapter xiii) in language eminently distinguished by beauty, propriety, and force, to commend that “more excellent” quality which

forms the substance of all true virtue, and without which the most splendid gifts will not render a profession of religion any thing better than a tinkling pretension.

Every one must admire the justness of thought displayed in the 12th chapter, and the moral beauty of the next; which indeed, for the practical value of the sentiments it contains, might fairly be balanced against all that has been written on ethical subjects by the sages of Greece and Rome. But in the midst of so much plain good sense, and shining wisdom, there are allusions and implicit assertions which demand special attention. In this catalogue of endowments and of functions, several of the terms are indeed perfectly intelligible; but others are not to be explained from the materials of common experience, or ordinary history. For example;—the *χαρισματα ἰαματων* *endowments of healings*, if understood simply as meaning ‘skill in medicine,’ is not only a strange phrase in itself, but seems strangely introduced among endowments specifically adapted to promote the religious improvement of a religious community. In this sense the phrase loads the passage with a manifest incongruity. Again: the *ἐνεργήματα δυναμεων* — is a phrase which, if we adhere to the ordinary meaning of the words, hardly admits of an intelligible rendering. — If the term be not vague and almost destitute of meaning—which

the terseness of the writer's style forbids us to suppose—it must convey a *conventional sense*, peculiar to these christians ; a sense not to be fully ascertained without a further knowledge of their history than this epistle conveys.

The word *προφητεια*, though in its primitive sense it conveys the idea of a divine communication, may mean nothing more than preaching or exhortation : and indeed the writer afterwards employs it evidently in this ordinary acceptation. But of all the terms here used, the most remarkable—considering the connexion in which it is found, is the *γενη γλωσσων*—*kinds of languages*. Are we then to understand that, among the members of this new sect, there were persons who possessed, by natural means, an accomplishment extremely rare among even the best educated of the Greeks—a knowledge of several languages ? This would be hard to suppose ; and the writer almost expressly affirms the contrary in the exordium of the letter. But even if it were so, can it be imagined that a writer who displays so much good sense should enumerate, among those endowments which had been bestowed by the Spirit for purposes of religious utility—such an exhibition of his learning as a linguist might make in an assembly of unlearned persons ? What end of edification could be attained even by the most discreet use of such a talent ?

We must then of necessity look further for the

means of affixing an intelligible sense to the terms above-mentioned, especially to the last. Now it happens that this last phrase is the one which the writer singles out as the text of an elaborate argument in the 14th chapter. In this argument the writer's object is not to prove the existence of the gift, so designated, or to defend it against scepticism; or to enhance its importance;—for its existence is assumed as a matter of fact, well known to those to whom he wrote:—but to define and illustrate the right use of it, and to caution those who possessed it against an ostentatious abuse of a faculty so extraordinary. The incidental allusions which occur in the course of this argument will, in the most satisfactory manner, explain the real nature of the gift to which it relates.

“ Cultivate love, aspire to intellectual endowments; but especially to the faculty of preaching.—He who speaks a language (unknown to the assembly) speaks to God, not to man; for no one attends:—but in his (own) spirit he utters things profound. On the contrary, he who preaches, speaks that which tends to promote the edification, or encouragement, or comfort of the hearers. He who speaks a (foreign) language *edifies himself*; but he who preaches, *edifies the congregation*.

“ I wish you all spoke (foreign) languages; but I had rather that you should preach. For the

“ preacher discharges a more important function
 “ than the speaker of languages ; unless, indeed,
 “ he interprets what he utters for the benefit of
 “ the congregation. Wherefore, my friends, if I
 “ come among you speaking various languages,
 “ what will you be the better unless I actually
 “ communicate to you some sacred discovery, or
 “ some information, or prediction, or instruction?
 “ Thus (to use a comparison) if inanimate instru-
 “ ments—the lute or the harp, make not a dis-
 “ tinction in the sounds they produce, how shall
 “ the music be recognized? Or if the clarion
 “ give an unmeaning blast, who will arm himself
 “ for the fight. Apply this simile to yourselves
 “ —unless what you utter be intelligible, how
 “ shall your discourses be understood: you may
 “ as well talk to the winds !

“ There are—what shall we say—so many
 “ kinds of languages spoken by mankind ; and
 “ not one of them is destitute of meaning. But
 “ unless I perceive the power of the words used
 “ by a speaker, we shall each deem the other a
 “ barbarian—(a foreigner). But you would not
 “ wish to be like foreigners one to another ;
 “ wherefore, since you desire endowments, seek
 “ such as may promote the edification of the con-
 “ gregation. Let then him who speaks a (foreign)
 “ language, make it his prayer that he may be
 “ able also to interpret what he utters. For if I
 “ pray in a foreign language, I do indeed inwardly

“pray; but my intellect is unprofitable (to
 “others). How then? I will pray both inwardly
 “and intelligibly. I will sing, not only with
 “mental perception, but so as may be under-
 “stood. If you utter praise with only a mental
 “perception of the meaning, how shall the un-
 “learned, who may be present, give the respon-
 “sive Amen to your thanksgiving; seeing that
 “he understands not what you say. It may be
 “that you give thanks well; but your neighbour
 “is not benefited thereby.

“I thank my God I surpass you all in the
 “power of speaking various languages. But in
 “the congregation I prefer to utter five words in-
 “telligibly, that I may instruct others, than to
 “speak ten thousand words in a foreign language.
 “—My friends, be not puerile in your mode of
 “thinking: you may well indeed be infantile in
 “evil; but in your judgments, be adults. In the
 “law it is written, ‘By men speaking other lan-
 “guages and using strange dialects will I ad-
 “dress this nation; and yet even then they will
 “not obey me, saith the Lord.’ Wherefore, the
 “(faculty of speaking different) languages is in-
 “tended for *a portent*; not for the benefit of be-
 “lievers; but (for the conviction of) unbelievers.
 “But preaching is not so much for unbelievers
 “(who keep aloof from our instructions) as for
 “those who believe.

“When, therefore, the congregation is as-

“sembled in your place of meeting, if all speak
 “foreign languages, and there come in unlearned
 “persons, or infidels, will they not say you are
 “frantic? But if all (in their turn, verse 29),
 “preach, and there come in an infidel, or an un-
 “learned person, he is convinced by all, his con-
 “science is searched by all, and his inmost
 “thoughts are laid open; so that falling prostrate,
 “he worships God, and confesses that God is
 “indeed among you.

“How is it then my friends?—When you as-
 “semble, every one (as I am informed) has a
 “psalm, or a piece of instruction, or (a discourse
 “in a foreign) language, or something specially
 “revealed to him, or something he has interpret-
 “ed.—Let all things be done for the common be-
 “nefit.—If any speak languages, let not more than
 “two, or at the most, three do so; and that in
 “turn: and let one interpret. But if no inter-
 “preter be present, let such be silent in the con-
 “gregation. Let two or three of the preachers
 “speak; and let the other (preachers) exercise
 “their judgment (upon what is said). But if a
 “(special) revelation is made to one who sits (on
 “the teacher’s platform) let the first speaker
 “desist. (By such an arrangement as this) you
 “may all, in turn, preach, that all may learn, and
 “all receive comfort. The spirit of the preacher
 “is under the preacher’s controul; for God is not
 “the promoter of tumult, but of peace; as is seen

“in all the assemblies of his saints. Wherefore,
 “my friends, aspire to the faculty of preaching;
 “yet forbid not any to speak (various) languages.”

From this extraordinary passage it seems hardly possible to deduce fewer than the following inferences. —

1. Without inquiring into the precise import of the terms, it is manifest that, in the Christian society at Corinth, some disorders took place in the exercise of certain faculties of utterance; so that their assemblies, instead of promoting the improvement of the community, tended to bring reproach upon the profession. These abuses Paul strenuously endeavours to correct; and for this purpose enforces, by various illustrations, the principle that the real instruction of the congregation ought to be the end ever kept in sight by those who took part in the public services of the society:—all things should be done “for edification,” and nothing allowed that was not useful; while a regard to propriety, good order, and peace, should prevail over the impulses of individuals. Now this general result of the advices given on this occasion by Paul is so consonant to the dictates of good sense, that it must, in common justice, be held to clear the writer from the imputation of being either an enthusiast, or a fanatic, or an extravagant demagogue. For this is altogether unlike the language which *universal experience* teaches us to expect from a man of an

inflamed imagination, a depraved temper, or a perverted understanding. To apply to a writer like Paul any one of the epithets just mentioned, would be at once to rob language of its significance—to confound all our ideas of the qualities of human nature, and to break up the whole body of historical documents into one chaotic mass of unintelligible confusion. We assume it then as certain, that whatever may be the nature of the facts to which he alludes, he is to be listened to with that respect which is due to a man of singular good sense and sobriety of judgment.

2. This abused faculty, whatever might be its nature, was possessed by *many* of the society—probably by the majority of the leading members, or those who occupied the upper seats in the place of meeting.* Had it been an individual or two that was to blame, Paul's reproofs would have been pointed to the offending parties. Besides, he expressly supposes the case that sometimes "all (the teachers) spoke languages;" or so many as to create a din of confusion: and in prescribing that not more than three should, at one meeting, exercise their gift, it is supposed that many might do so.

3. This faculty consisted in the possession and command of some actual language, understood by him who used it. This must be inferred from the

* See Note.

known sense of all the terms employed—*γλῶσσα*—*a language*—*ετερογλωσσος*—*a person speaking a foreign language*—and *βαρβαρος*—*one who uses a language not spoken in Greece*. “He who speaks a language edifies himself,” says Paul, which could not be unless he uttered a real language, understood by himself. “You give thanks *well*—but your neighbour is not benefited.” These expressions exclude the idea of the utterance of a torrent of inarticulate and unmeaning sounds.

4. It was not one and the same foreign language that was spoken by these gifted persons, but several; for not only are they called *γλῶσσαι*—*tongues*; but it is supposed by Paul that some of those who spoke were understood by none present but themselves, and that it might happen that no one was able to interpret what was said.

5. The faculty was not an occasional gift, or inspiration, like the rhapsody of a vaticinator; but a permanent knowledge and natural fluency, which being once possessed, was under the controul of the individual, and therefore, like all other endowments, liable to be abused. This is implied in the writer’s advice to place the exercise of it under regulations; and in his rebuke of those who employed it without regard to the advantage of the society. Nor does he anticipate any cavils founded upon the seeming incongruity of a reception of miraculous powers, apart from the discre-

tion necessary to use them well. He probably thought, and with reason, that men are left on the same ground of responsibility, whether the gifts with which they may be entrusted are received by natural, or by extraordinary means. Perhaps, as this is the only miraculous gift which is mentioned in the New Testament to have been abused, and to need regulation, it was the only one that was *permanently* possessed, or actually under the controul of those who received it.

6. This faculty, which Paul deemed to be of inferior value to the gift of common instruction, and which was of little use in the assemblies of the Christians, is yet attributed by him to the Divine Spirit; and is mentioned as a desirable gift—and one adapted to subserve an important purpose.—“Tongues are for a sign”—a sign which believers did not need; but which, if used on proper occasions, might convince unbelievers—or those of them whose minds were open to conviction, that the power of God was present, attesting the truth of the Christian doctrine. Now to answer this purpose, two things were necessary; first, that the language should be fluently and intelligibly spoken; and secondly, that it should be spoken by persons who could not be supposed to have acquired it in the ordinary mode of study and long practice.

Such then are the facts manifestly implied in

the passage before us, and one of the four following suppositions must be adopted in explanation of them, or at least, of Paul's argument.

1. That no such faculty of speaking foreign languages was possessed or pretended to by the Christians of Corinth; and that when he argues at length on the proper use of the gift, he was using words to which no intelligible meaning could be attached.

2. That this power was really possessed by Paul and the Corinthian Christians; but that it had been acquired in the ordinary mode of long continued study, and sedulous practice.

3. That the power, though not really possessed, was fraudulently or fanatically pretended to, and counterfeited by the Christians.

4. Or that it was actually possessed in the manner affirmed and supposed by Paul.

Little needs to be said to prove that the last only of these suppositions can be entertained consistently with common sense. The first cannot be reconciled with even the lowest idea of the writer's understanding:—what imaginable purpose could be attained by an attempt so stultifying, to crush the common sense of those to whom the letter was addressed?—a letter, too, addressed to persons who had just been sharply rebuked by the writer. Or if written, could it have escaped speedy contempt and oblivion? Suppositions of this sort are equally applicable to *all* ancient

writings, and if admitted, would nullify every kind of evidence, and destroy all distinction between history and fable.

The second supposition might seem possible, though surprising, if extended to Paul only, or to a very few individuals. Yet even in that case it is not easy to imagine by what means a faculty which did not surpass the ordinary powers of man, could be made to appear to unbelievers supernatural. But, as we have seen, the entire structure of the argument implies that *many* of the Christians possessed the command of languages. And shall we then suppose that numbers of persons, most of whom were uneducated, could by any motives be induced to apply themselves to the toil of learning languages, to support the pretensions of a new religion: or that, if so induced, they should succeed in the attempt? Was this a means likely to have been imagined by the founders of a new sect? Truly, the possession of so much influence over the minds of their followers as should tempt them to exact *this* toil, would be more amazing than any miracles! Realize the scene—these poor ignorant persecuted Christians, spending their nights over lexicons and grammars, or under the instruction of hired masters from different countries!

The third supposition is the one which will the first suggest itself to those who think confusedly, and will be the first rejected by those who think

accurately. False pretensions to miraculous powers have often been supported with some success:—and why not this? Let us attend to the circumstances of the case. Corinth was at this time the centre of a very extensive commerce: by means of its two harbours—one in each sea, it was easily accessible to vessels, both from Asia and western Europe, as well as Africa; so that it became a centre of exchange between many countries. Strangers from all nations—from every shore of the Euxine and the Mediterranean, were ever swarming in the ports, and crowding a city where every voluptuous pleasure courted the senses. Among these strangers there were found a full proportion of Jews—men who, hating all nations, and hated by all, held intercourse of traffic with all. And these Jews were the active and malignant enemies of the Christians. What then was easier than for them to bring this pretension—if indeed it had been a pretension, to the test. How readily might a bungling juggle of this kind have been exposed *at Corinth!* “Inform us,” might the Jew have said, “inform us which of the languages of the surrounding nations it is which you Christians profess to speak, and we will bring you natives, with whom you may essay your powers:—We have with us Tyrians, and Armenians, and Egyptians, and Nubians, and Cyrenians;—or Gauls, or Iberians, or Illyrians: Thracians also, Scythians, and Parthians.” If a pretension to a

miraculous knowledge of languages had been deemed by the founders of Christianity a practicable and promising expedient, there were inland and secluded cities, in upper Asia, in Thrace, in Gaul, in Spain, where the hazards of detection—supposing the attempt had been at all practicable—would have been comparatively few. But at Byzantium, at Alexandria, and at Corinth, though we might have heard of raising the dead, and healing the sick, nothing would have been said of “*the gift of tongues!*”

Upon whom could a pretended power of speaking languages impose?—never upon an unbeliever; for he could hear nothing that would not excite his mockery: and surely not upon even the simplest of the Christians, who could have witnessed nothing but such ever-repeated failures. Besides, if this gift of tongues had been indeed a matter of contrivance and imposture, what imaginable motive of policy or common prudence could impel an absent teacher—whose authority was disputed, and who had severe reproofs to convey, and many matters of personal contestation to argue—to dwell so minutely and so copiously upon this dangerous subject? Paul’s reasonings, and instructions, on the subject of miraculous gifts—and the gift of tongues especially, fill nearly one-fifth part of the whole epistle. If indeed it had been needful to whisper a word of caution to the principal actors in this scheme of

imposture; would not an obscure hint—intelligible only to the *wise*—have been more discreet than all this elaborate argumentation, intermingled as it is with reproofs and taunts?

Or let us view this impracticable supposition on another side.—If this faculty of speaking languages had been (by means which baffle conjecture) counterfeited, and so well counterfeited that Paul thought the juggle secure from detection, then his manner of treating the subject must seem not less strange, than his treating it at all, if he had apprehended exposure. This wonder, true or false, was new to the world; and quite peculiar to Christianity:—if it was a device, it was as bold a one as the mind of man can imagine; and if successfully executed—so successfully that Paul incurred no hazard in writing upon the subject to these disaffected disciples, then, supposing that the common impulses of human nature may afford ground of calculation, one might confidently expect that there would be some glorying, some attempt to excite wonder, some boastful declamation on the admirable gift. But is this in fact the tone of the writer? On the contrary, the whole intent of his argument is to bring down this endowment—marvellous as it was, to a lower place in the estimation of those who possessed it. The order in which the gifts of the Spirit are enumerated is remarkable:—“wisdom, knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning

of spirits ;—*tongues, interpretations.*” It is not the most dazzling, the most astounding, the most extraordinary, that take the lead ; but the most useful :—and last of all, that gift which, alone, had been perverted to purposes of ostentation. Again, when the possessors of these gifts are marshalled according to their respective dignities, the same good sense is conspicuous.—“ God hath placed in the church, first apostles, (the commissioned founders of the religion ;) secondarily prophets ; thirdly teachers ; *after that* miracles ; then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”—“ I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all ; yet in the church I had rather speak five words for edification,” &c.—“ Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not love, I am nothing.” Is this the language of a Thaumatergus—a wonder-worker—a successful practiser upon the credulity of mankind—of a vain-glorious pretender to supernatural powers, and of an impious forger of a divine commission ? Is it not rather the voice of truth, and of a heaven-descended wisdom ?

The fourth supposition—the only one common sense can admit, carries with it the truth of Christianity.

If those who honestly desire to obtain a rational conviction of the truth of Christianity, will analyze the workings of their minds while they hesitate

to admit the only reasonable explanation that can be given of the facts before us, they will find that though they cannot contemplate separately any one of the first three suppositions, and think it admissible; yet, that while they are looking at *one*, the others are *obliquely* kept in sight, as affording a sort of alternative, to which they may retreat. So that a supposition which reason spurns when placed in the focus of vision, retains just enough semblance of truth to keep its place on the verge of the field of sight:—though it can never be embraced, it is never dismissed. This is an illusion to which those whose powers of reasoning are not of the first order are peculiarly liable. And it is, in fact, a very frequent occasion of errors in common life, as well as in matters of opinion: for example:—

The ambition of a man of sanguine temper leads him into some course of life which neither his talents nor the means actually at his command render practicable.—Common sense, when consulted, gives ever and again the same brief response—"Retreat." But *possibilities* and *probabilities* without end, urge the adventurer to proceed: this, or that, or the other fortunate turn, would remove every difficulty. Yet when these possible aids are severally and distinctly examined, each is found to be frail as the spider's web, and utterly unworthy of being for a moment entertained by a reasonable mind. Nevertheless, while

each, in its turn, is brought up to be examined—and rejected, all the others range themselves behind the fond dupe, ready to catch him in their filmy illusions as he retreats: and though not one may singly endure to be looked at, the host obtends in the rear a plausible appearance of shelter to which he may escape when hotly pursued by right reason.

Thus, too often, do we sport with ruin; nor less often with error. And it may confidently be affirmed that, excepting cases of malignant and determined disbelief, in every instance in which the evidences of Christianity are held from year to year in abeyance, some illusion, like that above described, takes place as often as the subject is obtruded on the thoughts. It is the unhappiness of feeble intellects to tread an interminable circuit of doubt if once those enclosures are broken through within which alone feeble intellects are safe.

We must yet revert for a moment to the subject of the miraculous knowledge of languages:—

The displays of the divine power and wisdom in the material world are all, in truth, equally admirable—equally astonishing; yet, from the narrowness of our range of intellectual vision, and the imperfection of our reasoning powers, it will ever happen that particular instances in which either the fitness of the means to the end, or the

excellence and beauty of the workmanship are peculiarly apparent, will affect our minds more strongly than some other results of the same invariable intelligence. And thus, among those unwonted manifestations of the presence of the supreme agent by which the truth of the Christian religion was attested, there are some, which, more sensibly than others, declare the hand of God. We hazard then the assertion that, among the miracles recorded in the New Testament, none will so much fix the attention of reflecting minds, as the "gift of tongues." Nor perhaps is there one which stands further removed from all possible supposition of a merely physical agency, or of illusion or imposture.

Inasmuch as the miraculous impartation of languages was a work wrought upon that substance of whose mechanism and ordinary laws we are acquainted by consciousness, we seem qualified, in some measure, to follow or to scrutinize the divine agency further beneath the surface, than in the case of supernatural changes effected on brute matter or on the animal frame. Or if the movements of the divine hand are equally inscrutable in this as in every other operation, yet, at least, the knowledge we possess of the ordinary processes of the mind in accumulating ideas, puts us in a position to contemplate more nearly this wondrous bestowment of a sudden intellectual wealth.

If the human mind, as well as the material world, was to become the subject of supernatural agency, there are several imaginable modes in which this end might be accomplished. For example: its sensibilities and its perceptions of moral good might be so quickened and perfected as should ensure an invariably virtuous choice.— Or its powers of continuous reasoning, and of intuitive comprehension, might be so strengthened and expanded, as should bring the most remote, or complicated, or multifarious consequences, within the range of its easy and instantaneous apprehension. Or its powers of combination might receive an impulse of such activity and exactness, as should place under its command, in the happiest order, all possible ideas that the material and immaterial worlds may furnish. Any such extraordinary exaltations of the faculties would indeed draw the eyes of mankind upon the individual. But these gifts, how dazzling or excellent soever they might be, are still of an *indefinite* kind, and therefore not well adapted to the purpose of attesting the presence of a supernatural agency.

If then the proof of that fact is to be the ultimate reason of the interposition, then, something must be imparted which shall be at once definite in itself, appreciable by others, and manifestly beyond the attainment of those who possess it—by ordinary means. Knowledge then must be the

subject of a communication made for such a purpose. This knowledge must be exact and copious; or it would not stand beyond the suspicion of fortuity. It must be of difficult attainment, or the possession of it would not seem supernatural. It must also be familiar, or the proof could not be addressed to the multitude. Now if, on these premises, we compare the several kinds of knowledge which might be made the subject of such a supernatural communication, we shall see reason to acknowledge the proof of a divine wisdom in the selection actually made.

A knowledge of the abstract principles of mathematical or physical science, or of the laws of the material world, could never be estimated or understood by the mass of mankind.—None but philosophers, and hardly those, could receive the force of a proof so constituted. In like manner, a knowledge of past events could not be generally ascertained to be true. Nor could a supernatural knowledge of present transactions—remote in place, afford the means of a ready and unambiguous conviction. The knowledge of the future is indeed peculiarly adapted to compel a conviction of a divine interposition; and this means has, in fact, been abundantly employed in constructing the proof of the truth of religion. But this evidence is one which, in its nature, must be kept in store for the benefit of after times.

What remains then but the knowledge of living

languages for the accomplishment of the specific purpose in view?—A language is a vast collection of particular and definite facts; and such a knowledge of it as is implied in the ability to maintain fluent discourse—intelligible to natives, is not a vague possession of indistinct notions, but a firm hold of five times ten thousand exact recollections. A living language is, moreover, a collection of particular facts, familiarly known to the mass of the people. So that a pretension to speak it may be judged of as competently by an artizan as by a scholar: indeed nothing less than a vernacular use of his native tongue would gain the ear of an uneducated person. Again; a familiar and available knowledge of a foreign language is an acquirement in a high degree laborious and difficult to most men;—an acquirement which few *adults* make with entire success—which many could never make; and one which, in the progress of it, can neither be well hurried nor hidden. The existence therefore of an opulent profusion of this peculiar species of knowledge among the members of a promiscuous association, most of whom were manifestly destitute of those powers of mind and of those sedulous habits which would be indispensable even to a much inferior degree of proficiency, exhibited the highest imaginable attestation of a supernatural agency.

The instantaneous recollection and due collocation of words in common discourse is an astonishing

exemplification of the powers of mind. Nor do the ever-admirable works of the Creator offer to our inspection any piece of machinery more amazing than that by which this rapid and complicated movement is effected. Even if one system of signs only had been known to man, the steady, exact, and incalculably rapid performances of this immaterial machinery, which connects mind with mind, might seem complicated and difficult enough.—A faculty which enables its possessor, without error, without embarrassment, without conscious effort, to play upon fifty or a hundred thousand keys, distinguished from each other by the minutest differences, holds forth, surely, a high proof of the infinite power and intelligence of the Creator! But the human mind is capable of sustaining, without confusion, a double, a treble, a quadruple, complication of this intricate apparatus. For, by a certain process, though indeed a toilsome one, there may be inserted upon this first set of so many thousand keys, the threads of which one might imagine a breath of disturbance must throw into hopeless entanglements, another, and yet another, myriad of signs. And though, if the interior of the machine could be laid open, it must seem packed with a dense, countless crowd of ever-moving atoms, yet the commanding faculty to whose management the boundless wealth is committed, not at all bewildered, oppressed, or hurried; but rather strengthened in its throne

and rule by the accumulation of affairs—calmly, yet with the rapidity of the lightning-flash, calls up the obscurest particle from the mingled millions—marshals its various hosts, and orders the array of speech, at the command of faculties still higher in dignity than itself. Such are the powers of the human mind!—such, rather let us say, is the excellent workmanship of God!

Yet the labour of years is ordinarily required to furnish the mind with new sets of signs. Nor indeed is every mind naturally susceptible of this elaborated repletion of its machinery.—But here we have a record of unquestioned genuineness, and bearing every possible mark of authenticity, in which it is affirmed that many of the members of an association, gathered chiefly from the lower classes, possessed this rare command of various tongues. We hear them calmly instructed in the right use of the amazing endowment; and the writer, not boastful of the possession in himself, or in the sect of which he was a leader, enforces rather the dictates of true wisdom, and recommends his argument as much by plain good sense as by shining eloquence. Let these facts, so marvellous, yet so consistent, be explained if they may, or any supposition which excludes the immediate agency of God.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

“ One of themselves,* even a prophet of their own has said, ‘ The Cretans are always liars, “ evil beasts, slow bellies’—(false, fierce, and “ inert). This witness is true: wherefore, re-
“ buke them sharply.” The letter in which this passage occurs was addressed by Paul to a Greek, who had long been the companion of his travels, and whom he had lately left in Crete to preside over the Christian societies of the island.

It may well be asked—Was this a private or a public letter? In other words, did the author suppose that his friend and colleague would retain it in his own keeping—consisting as it did of personal instructions;—or did he intend and anticipate what actually happened, that it would presently be divulged in Crete, and thence diffused through the Christian societies in all parts

* Believed to be Epimenides—a poet and *prophet* of Crete—contemporary with Solon. The Cretans were, to a proverb, liars. Intemperate as a Scythian, dull as a Bæotian, false as a Cretan; were colloquial epithets among the Greeks.

of the world?—Let us say that the letter was intended for the eye of Titus only. The form of address, together with the nature of the instructions it contains, agree with this supposition, and rather suggest it than the opposite idea. In this case we need be the less surprised to find so severe, not to say offensive, an accusation as that just quoted, sweepingly hurled at the people of this island, by the teacher of a new religion, who elsewhere professes that he made it his rule to “become all things to all men;” and who, in his recorded discourses before magistrates, exhibits as much politeness as was consistent with sincerity. Other expressions also occur in the letter which accord with the supposition of its being a private communication, as Chap. ii. 15. “These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke, with all authority—Let no man despise thee.”

A confidential letter from one of the most active teachers of the new faith to his friend, disciple, and deputy, must, according to the established usages of historical inquiry, be held to furnish the most direct and conclusive of all kinds of evidence in illustration of the intentions and practices of the parties. Such a document opens to view the very recesses of the system, and leaves nothing in the way of proof to be desired. Nor need the coverings of art be feared in such an instance; for the common penetration of the men of one age has always been found to be more than sufficient

to pierce the concealments practised by those of another.—Deception is a wave, which presently ebbs, and leaves bare the spot it had covered for a moment.

But if it be imagined that this private letter, before it was suffered to go abroad, underwent the revision of some discreet person, who expunged from it such passages as might either awaken suspicion, or give offence, or appear incautious—then, surely, the very strong and irritating reproach, just quoted, would not have escaped the eye of the reviser. Again; if this letter, which we now suppose to be private, had been dressed up or garbled for the people by Titus, or his successor, then, if these bishops were dishonest men, and their purposes and conduct flagitious, it is hard to believe that they would have put into the hands of the people that high wrought description of the episcopal character which is found in the first chapter—“For a bishop must be blameless,” &c.

Now let him who accuses the first teachers of Christianity of collusion, or false dealing of any kind, name a passage in this letter which, on any common principles of interpretation may justify such a suspicion. Instead of hypothetically saying the Apostles *must* have been impostors, because Christianity was not true; let him trace in their private correspondence a single indication of fraud. Why should this correspondence alone

be thought to defy scrutiny? Or why should that scrutiny be declined by those who so dogmatically affirm that imposture lurks beneath the surface? Good sense—elevated, comprehensive and exact morality—fervent piety, and a calm intensity of every kindly feeling, are the qualities apparent in this letter;—to say that the writer was a fanatic or an impostor, is to act a part becoming the man who, looking full at the sun, declares that he sees only a foul spot—the fountain of night!

But let us suppose, on the other hand, that the writer of this letter intended, or at least anticipated, its publication.—He was then absolutely fearless of his adversaries, whether Polytheists, or Jews.—“There are (in Crete)” he says in this—as we now suppose—*public letter*, “many disorderly persons—talkers of nonsense—self-deceived—*φρεναπαται*;—especially those of the Jewish nation, who must be put to silence, for they pervert entire families—teaching things that are improper, for the sake of sordid gain.—They profess the knowledge of God; but their conduct belies their profession. They are filthy—*βδελυκτοι*—as well as disobedient, and proved to be wanting in every worthy deed!”—Such then is the style of a letter intended by the writer to be read in the Christian assemblies throughout the island! This was a charge delivered by the Apostle to the bishop, by the bishop to his presbyters, by the presbyters to the people. If he himself planted

Christianity in the island (which is doubtful) then there was nothing in his conduct which he wished to screen from the scrutiny of aggravated enemies. Or if it had been established there by others, then he felt so confident in the integrity and simplicity of their conduct, and in the goodness of the cause, that he knew nothing was in the power of the virulent, unprincipled, and interested zealots whom he thus brands with infamy. While Paul was "wintering at Nicopolis," iii. 12, what should prevent these accused Jews from traversing the island to collect proofs of the nullity of the miracles by which Paul himself, or the first teachers, had vindicated the claim to a divine commission? Such a procedure would have been only an act of self-defence; and, if Christianity had been founded in illusions, must quickly have destroyed its credit.

The passage above quoted coincides remarkably with several incidents recorded in the Acts in proof of the independence and characteristic intrepidity of Paul's temper. (See especially Acts xiii. 9, 46. xv. 38. xvi. 37. xix. 30. xxi. 13. xxiii. 3. xxv. 11. xxvi. 27.) If there be any certainty in the philosophy of human nature;—or, philosophy apart, if common sense, informed by observation, be at all a safe guide in judging of character, then we may pronounce that Paul's natural or acquired disposition was far removed from the servility of baseness, from the timidity

of dishonesty, and from that wily caution which, beyond any other trait, marks the union—a union not unfrequent—of hypocrisy and enthusiasm.

Paul's second epistle to Timothy seems to have been written during his last imprisonment at Rome; and not long before his death. Under his first confinement he had been treated with the respect and indulgence due to a citizen, to a man of polished manners, and to one who had been sent to Rome rather to rescue him from the furious bigotry of his countrymen, than because he was suspected of crimes by the Roman governors. But now he was "bound with a chain," as a malefactor of the lowest class—*κακουργος*: the charges brought against him were of such a kind as to fill his friends with dismay, iv. 16; and instead of entertaining, as before, the hope of release, he now seems to anticipate as inevitable, a violent death.

This epistle, therefore, may be assumed as furnishing the last evidence we possess relative to the character of this extraordinary man. He had now been, not less than twenty years a preacher of Christianity, and in the course of that time, as his letters abundantly testify, had repeatedly traversed Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy; and had resided, for a shorter or a longer time, at the principal cities of those countries—especially at Jerusalem, Damascus, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth,

and Rome. Even had he been altogether passive in the promulgation of Christianity—a mere attendant upon one of the Apostles, he must in that time, with his acuteness, and his extensive opportunities of observation, have become thoroughly acquainted with the real nature of the system, and with the characters and practices of its teachers. He had associated with the companions of Jesus, and with the very first converts in Judæa; he had held controversies with the Jews, at home and abroad, and had lived on terms of intimate and affectionate intercourse with many societies of converts from polytheism. Was Paul then really ignorant of the origin of Christianity? Had he been deluded and deceived by the Galilean preachers?

Not the most doting enthusiast who has ever surrendered his senses to the illusions of a dis-tempered brain, could, in the circumstances in which Paul was placed, have blinded himself to a system of frauds, if frauds had indeed been practised by the first Christian teachers. But even if that might be, are the discourses of Paul, in fact, those of a doting enthusiast? Let them and his history be searched. A man who, by the fever and exorbitancy of his imagination, and the weakness of his judgment, is peculiarly liable to become the dupe of the crafty, does not often display that mastery of the powers of observation which should give him a nice and instantaneous

tact in perceiving, and in availing himself of the dispositions of other men. Much less is such a one likely to exercise this fine tact in moments of tumult and personal danger. But Paul's conduct and discourses on several signal occasions, as in the riot before the castle at Jerusalem, and when examined by the Roman governors, exhibits, in a high degree this self-possession, this quick observation, and this delicate address. Or, to quote an instance of a different kind, is his address to the Athenian sophists, that of a man so lost in super-mundane speculations that he has no eye, no ear for what is passing in the real world?

Assuredly Paul was not a weak and visionary man: he was therefore no dupe. Or of whom was he the dupe? Let the epistles of Paul be placed on one side, and those of Peter and of John on the other; and then let it be imagined that the first was the victim of the craft of the two last! This were indeed a most preposterous inversion of probabilities; for the latter, as their writings attest, were men neither of literary or philosophical habits, nor of extensive knowledge of the world, nor of eminent intellectual endowments: but the former possessed all these advantages. Yet these were the prime agents in promulgating Christianity, and with them, if any where, the secret of its contrivance must have rested.

But the last possibility of supposing that Paul

was the dupe of others is cut off by his own explicit assertions ; for he takes up, in the fullest terms, a claim to the possession of miraculous powers. If Christianity were not true, what then was Paul ? what were those feelings, what those dispositions which twenty years habitude in promoting an impious fraud had formed ?—We do not ask what he was at Damascus, when first he joined the Christians ; but what at Rome, when awaiting the executioner ?—We must not be told that human nature is too strange and anomalous a thing to be made the subject of satisfactory reasoning.—The combinations of motives and faculties are indeed almost infinite ; yet even in these the prevalence of some great laws is conspicuous. But if the original combinations are intricate, and less easy to be classified—the effects of certain well known *external causes* when they operate upon the character during a length of time are not less conspicuous or less constant than the changes that take place in the material world.

Crime may surprise and overthrow a mind in which principle is yet undestroyed, and conscience quick ; but crime reiterated, day after day, from youth to age, infallibly assimilates every emotion to its own likeness. This law of the world of mind is not less uniform than those which regulate the movements of the heavens, or the decays and renovations of the animal system. He who spends all the mid years of life in a course of debauchery,

wasting the hours of light in sloth, and abusing the season of darkness in riot, becomes—inevitably becomes, after the first redeeming emotions of youth are exhausted, not merely the perpetrator of ill deeds, but the very concrete of wickedness. Nor do the tranquil and more intellectual vices produce, less certainly, by long indulgence, this loathsome homogeneousness throughout the character. The man who, from his thirtieth to his fiftieth year, gives up his soul to the amassing of money, by all means of craft, extortion, and parsimony, becomes, in that twenty years, dead to every emotion but one.

And surely *knavery* is not, of all the vices, that one which may be long practised without corrupting the heart:—on the contrary, while other vices deprave the moral sentiments only by slow degrees, and long habitude in evil, *this*, in its first stage, indicates a soul already destitute of sensibility to good; and in its progression, produces a firmer induration of the conscience than any other. But if the hardening influence of vice admits of another degree of intensity, we must say that knavery *in matters of religion* is the crime which, beyond all others, debases, deadens, and petrifies the human heart. Yet if Christianity was not true, then the authors of the purest morality—and the only pure morality in the world were, what a long continued perpetration of impious frauds must render men.

About two years before this second epistle to Timothy was written, the gardens of Nero had blazed with the burning bodies of a multitude of Christians, many of whom had been converted to this fatal belief—or confirmed in it, by Paul himself:—and had he witnessed these sufferings, or, on his arrival at Rome, been informed of them, and did he know that this persuasion was an illusion, and that the victims of Nero's cruelty were the dupes of his own practices! it might perplex a casuist to decide in that case between Nero and Paul, which had the strongest claim to the eternal detestation of mankind. The one, with a ferocity unknown to beasts of prey, delighted himself in the anguish of multitudes of his own species; but the other—if Christianity was not divine—had wilfully seduced these very sufferers into the infatuation which had involved them in these miseries. And far from relenting when he witnessed the fatal consequences of the delusion he had propagated, Paul employs the last months of his life in writing letters to his colleagues in distant countries—exhorting them to diligence in the propagation of this same faith.

If Christianity had been a mere system of morals, or a wild system of reveries, and if no claims to *supernatural powers* had been advanced by its teachers, there might have been room to imagine that Paul, and others, though aware of the fearful consequences so often involved in a

profession of their doctrine, believed themselves compelled by the high claims of truth to persist in their course ; and that they anticipated the triumph of their new code after a short period of suffering on the part of its adherents. This supposition would indeed comport very well with the idea of their honesty, and even benevolence. But the facts are quite otherwise :—for they boldly claim an authority immediately derived from Heaven, and attested by “ signs and wonders and mighty deeds.” Nothing can dismiss this claim from the primitive records of Christianity :—no ingenuity of criticism avails to disengage the morality from the miracles :—the two are indissolubly interwoven, and must be received or rejected together. In vain do we look from one hypothesis to another—the same simple fact meets us at every turn. These teachers advance a pretension which, if it was not real, places themselves in the very front of the hosts of evil-doers. And if they must indeed be marshalled with deceivers, then there remains the prodigious consequence—that the purest stream has issued from the foulest source.

Every lover of his species wishes Christianity to pervade the nations : every enlightened statesman desires to uphold its authority among the people : every wise father is anxious to imbue the minds of his children with its precepts. But what is the dilemma to which we are reduced in

availing ourselves of the excellent morality of the New Testament? It is this:—The teacher must either declare, or he must conceal his opinion of the authors of Christianity. If he declares it, then he must say to his hearers—or a father must say to his children, “In this book, better than in any other, you will learn the principles and precepts of true virtue:—study it, imbibe its spirit, and you will become pure, upright, benevolent: yet remember that when these writers pretend to bear a commission from heaven; when they talk of miracles, or profess to reveal the secrets of the unseen world, they were themselves violating the common rules of truth, and honesty, and piety; for, in fact, they bore no such extraordinary commission; they possessed no such miraculous powers; they knew no more than ourselves of what awaits man after death: the future judgment, the hell, the heaven they speak of, were the mere devices of their ingenuity, intended to give weight to their doctrine. Follow then their instructions; but beware of their example.”

But if so much ingenuousness as this would be thought to nullify whatever good might otherwise arise from the diffusion of the New Testament morality—seeing that the conscience and common sense of mankind strongly revolt at receiving precepts of virtue from the perpetrators of villany, let the public teacher and the parent adopt the

other alternative—namely, to conceal and disguise and deny his real opinion of the founders of Christianity. In that case his belief and canon of instruction may be thus expressed—“ I believe that true morality is best promoted among mankind, and in my family, by promulgating a system which had impious deceivers for its authors, and which, by an inevitable fatality, extending through all ages, can have no sincere followers that are not dupes, and no enlightened teachers that are not knaves !”*

Such is the creed of every one who admires—and he dares not do otherwise than admire, the morality of the New Testament, while he denies its divine authority. Yet not all these practical inconsistencies, or subterfuges, or sophistries, will, in the slightest degree, relieve the difficulties which, as a purely historical question, rest upon the supposition that the apostles pretended to powers they did not possess. We return then for a moment to the epistle last mentioned, and demand that it be read—we do not say with seriousness, or with candour, or with a disposition to be convinced, or with the exertion of critical acumen; but in *any* state of mind that chance, business, or pleasure, may induce—excepting only an obdurate malignity.—No reader can deny that the writer whom, to excuse his own infatuation, the infidel is compelled, against the current of all

* See Note.

proof, to calumniate, displays in this instance, eminently, the calmness and firmness of a great mind ; and the deep feeling of a great mind long exercised in suffering, and now excited by the welcome expectation of death and reward. In this, as in his other compositions, he exhibits, at once, an unbending regard to the peculiar morality which was then new to the world, and a high-toned reprobation of false pretences in religion. There appears also the same style of exact allusion to persons and incidents, which is so characteristic of all his writings. That love of order also, which belongs to a self-possessed mind, as well as the never-failing tastes of a man of intellectual habits are conspicuous in the request he inserts at the foot of his letter,—“The cloke that I left at Troas, with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee ; and the books, but especially the parchments.”

This epistle closes (the postscript excepted) with a burst of feeling upon which, had it appeared in the last address of Socrates to his friends, the modern admirers of polytheism would never have exhausted their praises. But, in truth, its Hellenistic phraseology is not more unlike the Attic style of the Athenian sage, than is its genuine and heart-moving pathos superior to the frigid and quaint apophthegms of the Greek.—“I am now ready to be offered (as a victim) and the time of my dissolution is at hand. I have fought a good

fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the well earned crown, which the Lord, the impartial Judge, shall award to me; yet not to me only, but to all them who desire his appearance."

CHAPTER XV.

USE OF ETHICAL WRITINGS AS THE MATERIALS OF HISTORY.

HISTORIANS afford little *direct* information illustrative of the moral condition of ancient nations. Nor indeed is it desirable that they should. For the subject is too indefinite to be treated in the style proper to history; and when historians affect to philosophise, they bring the simplicity of their testimony into just suspicion.* Besides, the moral condition of a people can be fairly estimated only by being placed in comparison with that of others, and no writer, how extensive soever may be his acquaintance with facts, can be considered as an equitable arbiter, either between his contemporaries and their predecessors, or between his countrymen and their neighbours.

Yet it does not follow because direct information on this head is properly or necessarily absent

* Gibbon; Hume; Voltaire; Raynal.

from the pages of historians, that therefore the most interesting of all historical facts must remain unexplored and unknown. The case is far otherwise; for whenever abundant literary monuments of an ancient people are in existence, the knowledge we are in search of may be collected copiously, and with a high degree of certainty. Yet the process is somewhat nice and difficult, inasmuch as the indications from which it is to be gathered are recondite. But for this very reason the conclusions we obtain by a cautious and diligent course of inference and comparison, are eminently exempt from just occasions of suspicion. And though the pages of historians are commonly swelled with copious and magnific descriptions of the resources, foreign influence, population, and polity of empires, an intelligent inquirer may obtain, from casual hints and hidden allusions, a more *solid* knowledge of the state of morals among the people, than he gains relative to any one of those more obtrusive facts.

It is obvious that we are not to follow, as our authorities, the embittered and empassioned declamations of disgusted misanthropes, nor the sharpened representations of city satirists, who draw the materials they are fond of, at once from the two most corrupted extremes of the social system—namely the pampered favourites, and the desperate outcasts of fortune. Nor may we admit, on the other hand, as evidence, either the pleasant

dreams of poets, who present pictures from which the ills of reality have been discharged, or the impracticable schemes of sanguine philosophers, who are less true to nature than even the poets.

The proper sources of information and grounds of inference in an inquiry of this kind are such as the following.—The permanent customs, modes of life, domestic usages, and public amusements, prevailing among the people :—the sentiments and conduct attributed by them to their deities :—the popular feeling, whether of approbation, surprise, or abhorrence, excited by the actions of public persons. Particulars such as these may be collected in abundance from the pages of historians and miscellaneous writers.

But our most explicit information is to be gathered from the *preceptive code* existing among the people whose morals are to be ascertained. This code consists of two portions—namely, that which is fixed, and consigned to the executive by the legislative authority ; and that which floats at large in those ethical writings which have taken a permanent place in the literature of the country. In deriving inferences from the first—namely, the sanctioned laws of a people, several distinctions and cautions must be observed :—for example—antiquated laws must scarcely be admitted in evidence ; and in examining recent enactments the political circumstances of the moment must never be forgotten, for the immediate interests of parties

or of individuals not seldom produce legislative decisions that are altogether anomalous to the condition of the people. Every intelligent reader of history must also have observed that mere fortuity has always had a seat in senates, and has actually exercised much more influence in the grave business of law-making than the sage and solemn forms of the place and process seem to bespeak.

Our present purpose does not allow these distinctions to be illustrated. It is only with the last named source of information that we have now to do. Our position is this—That, with due caution, extensive and substantial information relative to the actual moral condition of a people or community, may be collected from the ethical writings that have been accepted and circulated among them. This proposition, which carries with it very important consequences, we propose briefly to illustrate by some examples.

Every ethical or hortatory composition contains, by implication, two fixed points, which it is the business of the inquirer to ascertain and unfold. Of these the one is much more readily found than the other; yet there exists a means of measuring the distance between the two: so that the one being determined, the other also may be discovered:—for example.—The first point ascertainable in an ethical composition is the system of morals, or the standard of perfection, or

the rate of excellence which the author has imagined, and which he recommends and enforces. This point, which may be termed *the moral level of the writer's mind*, is, in most cases, quite easy to be fixed. The second and less obvious point, and that which is the very object of our inquiries, is the actual state of morals among those whom the writer addresses, which may be called *the real level of manners*. Our business then is to find this last, or, unknown point, by measuring the distance between the two. Now this distance is more or less distinctly indicated by the tone and allusions of every ethical composition. We have then in our problem three terms;—one known—one demanded—and a middle term, connecting the two, which remains to be worked out of the materials by analysis.

The distinctness and certainty of the indications from which our middle, or *measuring term*, is to be formed, will, it is obvious, vary greatly in different cases:—In works of an abstract and philosophical cast they will be extremely faint, and scarcely at all available for our purpose; while in those treatises or addresses which are of a simple and popular character, and which consist of distinct exhortations, reproofs, and specific advices, there will be no difficulty whatever in deriving the inferences we are in search of. It may also be added that serious writers are more safe guides than those who indulge in satire; for the satirist

loves to select extremes, rather than to exhibit middle reality.

Aristotle's ethics may very properly be named as a perfect instance of the former kind :—it is a collection of pure abstractions ; and though human virtues and vices are the *material* upon which the author works, any other qualities that were susceptible of analysis, distinction, and classification, might as well have been made the subject of his dialectic process. To define, to separate, to distribute, is the author's business :—*Temperance, Prudence, Excess, Fortitude, Avarice, Benevolence*, are the mere ticketed *calculi* with which he plays. This book of *morals* is in fact only a chapter of logic. The *historical* inference it supports relates much more to the intellectual, than to the moral condition of the people among whom it was produced and admired :—viewed in this light it proves most conclusively that the philosophic class had reached the highest stage of ratiocinative refinement that can be imagined to be possible—short of the attainment of practical wisdom.

Yet even this dense collection of definitions might, if readier sources of information were wanting, afford many, not very vague conclusions relative to the moral sentiments of the Greeks in the author's times. A single instance may suffice to establish our assertion : though it is not upon abstractions of this sort that we should choose to rest the force of an argument. The passage

tively from a passage like this, it may fairly be said to indicate the existence of popular notions of moral greatness, far refined beyond the ideas of nations merely warlike; and far exalted above those of a people merely commercial. The writer surely had, in the history of his own country, seen examples of heroic virtue which approached the perfect image he exhibits. One is not surprised to learn that he belonged to the same race which produced Aristides, Cimon, Epaminondas, and Phocion. It is observable that Aristotle's magnanimous man is decked only with the honours befitting a *citizen*, or distinguished leader in a republic;—not with the gaudy shews of oriental despotism:—it is not deemed a becoming part of his hero's glory that millions of his species should lay in the dust at his feet. We may also fairly remark, that this acute thinker had evidently no idea of that peculiar sentiment which is engendered in great minds by a constant and practical reference to the natural and moral attributes of the Deity:—his hero is purely *mundane*, or, if we may so accommodate the term—*atheistical*. Neither did his analysis include that humility or lowliness which springs from a sense of delinquency, or imperfection, in the sight of the Supreme Lawgiver and Judge. If ideas of this class had been at all known to the Greeks of that age, or had come within the writer's intellectual range, he would assuredly have included them among his

definitions, whether he thought them worthy of commendation, or of contempt. For his manner is to omit no abstract idea that bears any relation to his topic.

To what extent sentiments like those described by Aristotle were practically efficacious in his times, it is not easy to ascertain from the passage just quoted; since the treatise in which it appears is of an abstract, not of a hortatory character: yet it contains one expression which, on the plan of our present argument, we should call *a term of measurement*:—namely, that “true magnanimity is exceedingly rare”—or hard to be attained; *—in other words, that it was much easier to find, among the writer’s countrymen, an Alcibiades, than an Epaminondas. But the precise value and historical significance of a passage like this will best appear by bringing it into comparison with a quotation on a similar topic from the most eminent of the Roman moralists.

The Treatise—*De Officiis*, though addressed by Cicero to his son, is much rather abstract than hortatory; yet, compared with the *Ethics* of Aristotle, it is less metaphysical, and approaches far nearer to the modern idea of a practical work. Without designedly painting the manners, or formally estimating the morals of his times, this great

* Δια τουτο χαλεπον τη αληθεια μεγαλοψυχον ειναι.

† *Gravior*: or *gratior*.

writer furnishes, in his various compositions, ample indications from which the state of both may satisfactorily be inferred. Scarcely a page of his works can be opened which would not yield an instance in illustration of our argument.—“But of all social bonds, none can be found more weighty† or more dear, than that which binds each one of us to our country. Dear are our parents, dear our children—relatives—friends; but in our country are centred the endearments of all:—for which, what good man would hesitate to die, if his death might promote its interests? Whence is the more detestable the ferocity of those who, by every crime, rend their country; and who have ever been, busied in accomplishing its ruin. Actions performed magnanimously and courageously we are wont to applaud, as it were, with a fuller mouth. Hence the themes of orators on Marathon, Salamis, Plataea, Thermopyle, Leuctra:—hence our Cocles; hence the Decii; hence Cnæus, and Publius Scipio; hence Marcellus; and others without number: for the Roman people especially excels in greatness of soul. Indeed, our love of military glory is declared by the fact, that our statues are adorned with the garb of the warrior. But that elevation of soul which displays itself in dangers and labours, if it wants probity—if it contends not for public, but private advantages, becomes a vice. Not merely is it not a virtue; but is rather to be deemed a ferocity

—repulsive to human nature. Well therefore is fortitude defined by the Stoics, when they say, it is ‘virtue defending right.’ Wherefore no man who has attained the praise of fortitude has been renowned for treachery and mischief; for nothing can be laudable which is unjust. Those, therefore, are to be esteemed valiant and magnanimous, not who commit, but who repress wrongs. That true and wise greatness of soul, which is indeed laudable and consonant to nature, regards deeds more than fame; and would rather *be*, than *seem* illustrious. And he is not to be reckoned among great men who is dependant upon the erring opinion of the thoughtless multitude. For lofty spirits, always thirsting for glory, are easily driven on to what is unjust. And it is indeed hard to find one who, while he undergoes labours and dangers, does not seek glory as the wages of his exploits. De Officiis, l. i. c. 17, 19.

In these quotations there is conspicuous, in the first place, that paramount passion—the love of country, which belonged so peculiarly to the Roman people—which was a principal cause of the growth of their power, and which, though on the wane, was not extinct in the age when the state ceased to be free. ‘What good man would hesitate to die for his country’s good:’ this was a sentiment much more characteristic of the Romans than of the Greeks. The chiefs of the latter peo-

ple not seldom betrayed their country for gold; those of the former, scarcely ever. In the second place, we must remark that, in the above quotation, compared with that from Aristotle, the military spirit is much more prominent. Cicero's great man is, of course, a warrior: Aristotle's seems rather a statesman:—the Roman obtains *glory* (*gloria*), the Greek *honour* (*τιμη*) *dignity*. The one, if destitute of probity, becomes the factious destroyer of his country, and is regardless of dangers and toils: the other—merely vain. The Greeks addicted themselves to war to defend their liberties, and to determine their intestine quarrels; but the Romans, from the innate love of combat, and the insatiable desire of conquest. Both moralists make true virtue essential to true magnanimity; but the Greek proves this necessary connection on abstract principles; the Roman insists that *utility* must be made the ultimate rule of conduct; and this principle is expressive of that practical good sense in which the Romans so much excelled the Greeks. If then, by an error of transcription, the passages above quoted were attributed, each to the other writer, a reader well acquainted with the history of the two people, would hardly fail to detect the incongruity of sentiments and phraseology. The two authors hold essentially the same opinions; but the one thinks like the companion of sophists, the other like the friend of soldiers. This perceptible difference

between the two is an index to the *historical significance* of both.

The two quotations already made, we shall now compare with one, on a subject not very dissimilar, from a modern writer :—every reader will perceive the indications of a great change and improvement having taken place in the sentiments of mankind, between the times of the ancient and the modern author. The work we are about to quote is altogether of a philosophical and abstract kind, and therefore is the more fairly placed in comparison with those of Aristotle and Cicero.

“The duty (of respecting the natural equality of men) is violated by pride or arrogance, which leads a man, without cause, or without sufficient cause, to prefer himself to others, and to contemn them as not on a level with himself. We say *without cause*; for when a man rightfully demands that which gives him pre-eminence over others, he may properly exercise and maintain that advantage—yet avoiding absurd ostentation or contempt of others. As, on the other hand, any one properly renders honour or preference to whom it is due. *But a true generosity or greatness of soul is always accompanied by a certain seemly humility, which springs from the reflection we make upon the infirmity of our nature, and the faults which heretofore we may have committed, or which yet we may commit, and which are not less than those of other men* It is a still greater offence for a man to

make known his contempt for others by external signs, as by actions, words, gestures, a laugh; or any other contumelious behaviour. This offence is to be deemed so much the greater, inasmuch as, beyond any thing else, it excites the minds of others to wrath and the desire of revenge. So that many may be found who would rather put their life in immediate peril, and much rather break amity with their neighbours, than sustain an unrevenged affront. Since, by this means, honour and reputation are injured, the unblemished integrity of which is essential to peace of mind." Puffendorf, *De Officio Hominis et Civis*. l. i. cap. vii. sect. 5, 6.

The latter part of this quotation precludes the idea that the writer lived in times when a sordid, or servile insensibility to reputation had extinguished those passions to which so much importance, and so much merit, was attributed by ancient warlike nations. At the same time, the first part of it contains a corrective, or antagonist sentiment, of which scarcely a trace is to be found in the Greek and Roman writers;—a sentiment plainly arising from an enhancement of the notion of *moral responsibility*; and from a higher estimate of the nature of virtue. In other words, the two first quoted writers were polytheists; the last was a Christian.

We have now to adduce an instance of a different kind in illustration of the historical signi-

ficance of purely ethical compositions:—it is taken from the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus. The icy sophisms of the Stoics found indeed some admirers at Rome before the times when the ancient republican severity of manners had disappeared. But *theoretical* stoicism never reaches its perfection till some time after *practical* stoicism has become quite obsolete. It is, in fact, a reaction in the intellectual world, produced by the rankness and wild exuberance of luxury, sensuality, effeminacy, and the arrogance of preposterous wealth. If, therefore, the date of the *Enchiridion* were unknown, it would be more safely attributed to the times of Domitian, than to the age of Cincinnatus, or of Cato. In reading the following passage one may readily imagine the lame sage,* wrapping himself in his spare blanket, and ample self-complacency, as he made his way, unnoticed, through the insolence and voluptuousness of imperial Rome.

“ If ever it happens to thee to turn from thy path with the intent to gratify any one, know that thou hast lost thy institute, (i. e. forsaken thy *rule*). Let it be enough for thee, on all occasions, to be—a *philosopher*. But if, indeed, thou desirest to *seem* a philosopher, look to thyself, and be content with that. Let not such thoughts as

* *Servus Epictetus sum natus ; corpore claudus.*
Irus pauperie, deliciæ Superum.

these trouble thee—I live without honours, and am no where accounted of....Is some one preferred to thee at table—or saluted before thee, or consulted before thee? If these things are goods, thou oughtest to congratulate him to whose lot they fall:—if they are ills, do not grieve because they have not befallen thee. But remember, that as thou dost not pay attention to those things by which exterior advantages are obtained, it cannot be that they should be given thee. For how can he who stays at home fare the same as he who goes abroad?—or can the same things happen to him who is obsequious, and to him who is not?—to him who praises, and to him who praises not? Thou wilt be unjust and greedy if, without having paid the price at which these things are sold, thou dost expect to receive them freely. Now what is the price of a lettuce?—say a farthing:—One therefore pays his farthing, and takes his lettuce; but thou dost not pay, and dost not take. Think not thyself in worse condition than he. For as he has his lettuce, so thou hast the farthing thou didst not pay. And thus it is in other things.—Thou hast not paid the price at which an invitation to a feast is sold: for he who makes a feast sells invitations for flattery, for obsequiousness. Give then the price, if thou thinkest the bargain to thy advantage. But if thou likest not to afford the cost, and yet wouldst receive the things, thou art at

once greedy and foolish. And hast thou then nothing instead of the feast? Yes truly; thou hast this, that thou didst not commend one whom thou dost not approve;—nor hast thou had to bear his insolence on entering his halls.” Enchirid. c. 30, 32.

It is but justice to Epictetus to say, that many admirable sentiments are to be found in his writings;—though, for a portion of them, there is reason to believe he was indebted to Christianity—of which obligation he makes no acknowledgment. But taken as a whole, the treatise from which our quotation is derived furnishes an example of that sort of laborious and unsuccessful conflicting of pride with pride, which is natural to men of superior intelligence, occupying an inferior condition, and surrounded by vulgar insolence, servility, and profligacy. There was evidently a *class* of persons in the author’s time in circumstances like his own—that is to say, intellectualists, who, as a defence against the scorn of worldlings, put on a mail of steely logic.

The Enchiridion, taken as *a material of history*, may fairly support the inference that, in the age of Epictetus, wealth and luxury had triumphed over stern principles and severe manners:—that the philosophical character had ceased to command universal respect, as at Athens in the age of Plato;—and that philosophy itself, having

passed its prime, was fast becoming palsied and querulous.*

The moral treatises of Plutarch are of a practical more than of a philosophical kind, and yield therefore abundant indications both of the opinions and the manners of his age. In truth the student of history would hardly need other aid in ascertaining the religious and moral sentiments of the age of Trajan than he may find in the pages of this

* A comparison at once curious and instructive might be drawn between two writers who, at first sight, may seem too little allied to be named together:—I mean Epictetus and Thomas a Kempis. Yet a multitude of quotations from the *Enchiridion* and the *De Imitatione*, might be adduced in proof of a real affinity. There is even a similarity in the form of the two works; for both writers, in a style of severe and laconic simplicity, address their pointed aphorisms—now to themselves—now to their half refractory disciple—much in the manner of a nurse, upbraiding a child. A peculiar *monotony*, both of *principle* and of *topics* pervades both books. Both authors compel wisdom to ascend the summit of a snow-girt peak, where she can be neither approached nor even heard, nor scarcely perceived by the mass of mankind. Both writers were in fact, though on widely different principles, *recluses* from the ordinary walks of human life, and recusants of the common emotions of our nature. And both writers, by an implicit or tacit contrast, exhibit the fallen or falling condition of the social system of their times. Yet there is a wide difference between the two; for while the rigid Stoic presents to view the darkness of paganism, enlivened by a glimmer from Christianity;—the lowly Monk holds forth the bright glories of divine truth, dimmed only by the errors of superstition.

writer. Extensively learned in books—well acquainted with the world—and a universal thinker, he had caught from the Roman writers,* and from his intercourse with the public men of that nation, that spirit of plain good sense and that regard to *utility* by which the Romans were so much distinguished. Among this author's moral pieces there is not perhaps one more curious, or, as a material of history, more valuable than that 'Concerning Superstition—περι δεισδαιμονίας—the dread of *dæmons*.' With great force of language and aptness of illustration he depicts the mental torments of the man who believes the gods to be malignant, inexorable, and capricious, and he contrasts this unhappy temper with the comparatively *harmless error* of those bolder spirits who cast away altogether the belief and fear of supernal beings; and while he recommends 'the mean of piety'—εν μεσω κειμενην την ευσεβειαν—he decidedly prefers atheism to superstition.—

"What say you?—The man who thinks there are no gods is impious, *ανοσιος*? But is not he who thinks them to be such (cruel and malignant) chargeable with opinions much more impious? For my own part I would much rather that men

* Plutarch was imperfectly versed in the Latin language, though he resided nearly forty years at Rome. His writings however make it evident that, by the aid of his friends, he had become well acquainted with Roman literature.

should say—‘there is no such person as Plutarch;’ than that they should affirm that Plutarch is a man, capricious, instable, prone to wrath, revengeful of accidental affronts, pettish; one who, if you have neglected to invite him with others to a feast, or if, being otherwise engaged, you have failed to salute him at your gate, will devour you, or seize and torture your son; or will send a beast, which he keeps for the purpose, to ravage your fields.”

Plutarch mentions or describes four states of mind, as known and existing in his times—namely, 1. ‘The wise piety,’ which he recommends, and which forms the medium between superstition and atheism.—2. The joyous or *festive* worship of the gods, in which he sees nothing to reprehend.—3. A bold rejection of all religion, which he thinks *an error*, though an innocent error:—and 4. Superstition, which is not merely an error, but a practical evil of the worst kind. Of the first he says almost nothing; nor does he offer a single hint explanatory of the mode in which the gods and goddesses of the Greek mythology might be made the objects of a devout and reasonable piety:—and yet piety without a god, is an unmeaning term. Plutarch’s ‘piety’ is then a vague sentiment, which he feels to be proper to human nature, and highly beneficial; but which was absolutely destitute of solid ground, or certainty; for no invisible being or beings were

known to him whom he could both love and fear. Even if philosophers, by difficult and doubtful abstract reasonings, might work out for themselves an idea of the Deity, such as might keep alive the sentiment of piety, no such abstruse notion could be brought within the apprehension of the vulgar. What is there then in religion left to the vulgar?—not atheism : for that is an error :—not superstition ; for that is a tormenting mischief :—nothing remains but the festive or pleasurable worship of the gods :—this, with all its flagrant impurities, and all its follies, was then the only portion that could be assigned to the millions of mankind :—Plutarch knew of no alternative on which to found the religious sentiments of men.

On another occasion this author expresses his opinion strongly on the necessity of religion for the support of the social system.—“It seems to me that it were easier to build a city without a foundation, than to construct, or to preserve a polity, from which all belief of the gods should be removed.” (*Advers. Coloten.*) Yet how great and deplorable soever were the evils of atheism, he deemed those arising from superstition to be far greater. According to his very full and explicit testimony, when the only theology known and acknowledged by the Greeks took possession of timid minds, it rendered life intolerably burdensome.—“Of all kinds of fear none produces such incurable despondency and perplexity as

superstition. He who never goes on board a ship does not fear the sea ; nor he the combat, who is not a soldier ; nor he the robbers, who stays at home ; nor does the poor man fear informers, nor he who is low, the eye of envy ; nor he who inhabits Galatia, earthquakes ; nor the Ethiopian, the thunderbolt. But the man who dreads the gods, dreads all things ;—the earth, the sea, the air, the heavens, darkness, light, noise, silence, dreams. The slave in slumber forgets his master, the captive his chain, the wounded and the diseased their anguish :—kind sleep, friend of the sufferer, how sweet are thy visits ! But superstition admits not even this solace, it accepts no truce, it gives no breathing time to the mind, nor permits the spirits to rally or to dispel its harsh and grievous surmises. But like the very region of the wicked, so the dreams of the superstitious man abound with terrific apparitions, and fatal portents : and this passion, always inflicting punishments upon the distracted spirit, scares the man from sleep by visions. And he—self-tortured, believes himself obliged to comply with fearful and monstrous behests. Such a man, when he awakes, instead of contemning his dreams, or smiling with pleasure in finding that what had disturbed him has no reality, still flies before an innoxious shadow, while at the same time he is substantially deluded by falling into the hands of conjurers and impostors, who strip him of his

money and impose upon him various penances."

The tortures inflicted upon timid spirits by the Grecian polytheism are depicted with not less force by the observant Theophrastus.—"Superstition is a desponding dread of divinities (dæmons). The superstitious man, having washed his hands in the sacred font, and being well sprinkled with holy water from the temple, takes a leaf of laurel in his mouth, and walks about with it all the day. If a weazel cross his path, he will not proceed until some one has gone before him, or until he has thrown three stones across the way. If he sees a serpent in the house, he builds a chapel on the spot. When he passes the consecrated stones, placed where three ways meet, he is careful to pour oil from his cruet upon them: then falling upon his knees, he worships, and retires.—A mouse, perchance, has gnawed a hole in a flour-sack: away he goes to the seer, to know what it behoves him to do; and if he is simply answered, 'Send it to the cobbler to be patched,' he views the business in a more serious light, and running home, he devotes the sack as an article no more to be used. He is occupied in frequent purifications of his house;—saying that it has been invaded by Hecate. If in his walks an owl flies past, he is horror-struck, and exclaims—'Thus comes the divine Minerva.' He is careful not to tread upon a tomb, to approach a corpse, or to

visit a woman in her confinement ; saying that it is profitable to him to avoid every pollution. On the fourth and seventh days of the month, he directs mulled wine to be prepared for his family ; and going himself to purchase myrtles and frankincense, he returns, and spends the day in crowning the statues of Mercury and Venus. As often as he has a dream, he runs to the interpreter, the soothsayer, or the augur, to inquire what god or goddess he ought to propitiate. Before he is initiated in the mysteries, he attends to receive instruction every month, accompanied by his wife, or by the nurse and his children. Whenever he passes a cross-way, he bathes his head. For the benefit of a special purification, he invites the priestesses to his house, who, while he stands reverently in the midst of them, bear about him an onion, or a little dog. If he encounters a lunatic, or a man in a fit, he shudders horribly, and spits in his bosom." Characters. c. 16.

The four centuries intervening between Theophrastus and Plutarch, during which a philosophical atheism spread widely among the educated classes, had not, it appears, lessened the terrific influence of the Grecian polytheism over melancholy minds. On the contrary, if one might judge from the style of the two writers in describing the same affection, it seems to have been enhanced rather than diminished ; for the language of the later writer is much stronger than that of

the earlier. The verisimilitude of both descriptions, and their accordance, leave no room to doubt that this effect of the religious belief of the Greeks was of frequent or ordinary occurrence among them. Indeed there is reason to think that few persons of serious temper, even though imbued with the spirit of the sceptical philosophy,* could free themselves from the burdensome scrupulosities and the horrific fears which attend every form of polytheism, and from which, neither the refinement, nor the scepticism, nor the voluptuousness, nor the frivolity, nor the good taste, nor the subtil reasonings, of the Greeks, could emancipate their religion.—The elements of dejection and of fear were as active, almost, in the theology of the laughing and acute Athenian, as in that of the gross and gloomy Scythian. To frame for himself a false religion, having a benign and happy influence, surpasses the ingenuity of man.

It will be granted then, we imagine, that passages such as those above quoted, possess a substantial value, and a high degree of importance when placed among the materials of history.—In deriving fair inferences from them we tread upon solid ground :—*no one's veracity* is taxed. Ethical

* The philosophic Julian might be named in illustration of this assertion.—Beside his hatred of Christianity, his conduct was evidently influenced on many occasions by a very honest dread of the capricious dæmons whose falling interests he so zealously upheld :—witness his magical practices.

writers, especially those most distinguished by powers of mind, reflect the image of their own principles, and of the manners of their times :—our business is to observe its colouring, and its forms. In some instances we may infer too much, in others may mistake a partial for a general representation; but if, in the spirit of philosophic caution, we review a wide field of ethical literature, the *general result* of the induction cannot differ much from absolute truth.

If, for example, from the entire series of Greek writers, beginning with Homer and Hesiod, and ending with Julian and Eunapius, all passages of a purely ethical kind were to be extracted and arranged in chronological order, the collection would afford the means of ascertaining, in the most complete and satisfactory manner, both the abstract system of morals and religion known to that people, and the actual state of morals and manners, as it varied from age to age. With such materials before us, there would be much less room for conjecture, much less danger of error, in determining the moral condition of the people, than is found in ascertaining the extent of their political power, or the amount of their commercial wealth: for on these latter subjects historians either give us no information, or such as is either too formal or too vague to be admitted without suspicion.

Upon ethical passages, such as those we have

adduced above, one remark must be made, namely, that as they have more of an abstract than of a practical or hortatory form, they fail to afford very definite means of fixing the level of the manners of the times. In the profane authors there is little of direct admonition or reproof, and scarcely any thing like an appeal to a standard of right. This style of composition, we may almost say, was peculiar to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures; and the reason is obvious.—The Greek and Roman ethical writers discuss questions of morality in the tranquil tone of learned disquisition, each saying the best things in the best manner he could:—no man was authorised to do more than propose his *opinion*: no anxious feeling of official responsibility, no high solitudes, gave seriousness or force to their manner. Morals were hardly at all founded upon religion: on the contrary, an ethical treatise containing the native expression of reason and conscience, was a virtual refutation of the national theology, and a sarcasm upon the characters of the gods. Especially it is to be observed, that the instruction and reformation of *the mass of mankind* entered not at all into the contemplation of moralists and philosophers, who, while they amused one another with eloquent disquisitions, were never troubled by the thought that the millions of their fellows by whom the voice of philosophy was never heard, remained, from age to age, untaught in virtue.

But the ethical literature of the people of Palestine, from the age of Moses till the time of John, was always and altogether of a different character. Not philosophy, but morality, was paramount; and morality was immediately dependant upon religion. And it was not to a small class, but to the people, that ethical writings were addressed:—and it was not for amusement, but for reproof, that they were so addressed:—and these writers, instead of proposing their individual opinions, and recommending those opinions by abstract reasonings, took the short course of appealing to a known and absolute standard of right and wrong. They speak to their fellows as from on high; they take the tone of authority; and each acquits himself, with fear and gravity, of a weighty responsibility. From the writers of Palestine—Jewish and Christian—all the modern western nations (and we may say the Mahomedan nations also) have learned the style of *instruction*, *admonition*, and *reproof*, which can have its origin, and derive its force, and maintain its influence, only from a *Divine Revelation* intrusted to the administration of human agents.

But our present object leads us to remark that, whether or not this peculiarity of the Jewish and Christian writings be attributed to their divine origination, it renders them incomparably more *available* as historical documents, than are the writings of other ancient nations. For inasmuch

as these ethical compositions unite the several qualities of being *authoritative*, *hortative*, and *popular*, they leave the intelligent inquirer nothing to wish for in ascertaining either the moral level of the writer's mind, or the actual level of manners in his times. It is quite evident that an appeal to a fixed standard, and an admonitory application of its known rules to the existing practices of individuals, completes the requisite *data* of the historical problem explained at the commencement of this chapter.—In *the standard*, we have, so to speak, a *known quantity*; and in *the hortatory forms of address*, a *mean of measurement*, by which the actual state of morals may be ascertained.

A very high degree of importance may fairly be attached to the consequences that follow from this comparative estimate of the Greek and Jewish ethical writers; for if, from the former, a notion substantially correct may be derived of the *morality* and of the *morals* of the most refined of all polytheists; from the latter we may infer, with tenfold exactness and certainty, the morality and the morals of the Hebrew nation, and of the Christian community. Every one knows what must be the result of such a process of inquiry.—That it would prove the actual existence and operation of a system of Theology and of Ethics so pure, elevated, and perfect, that all after nations to whom it has been made known, have found nothing left to them but to admire and

adopt its principles. What can the modern philosopher or practical moralist do but work up the materials which he finds ready to his hand in the New Testament? To devise a new theology, or to invent a new morality—such as should recommend itself to the common sense of mankind, is as impracticable as to propose a new set of mathematical axioms. Truth is single and simple; and when once discovered, must be followed:—every aberration presently proclaims its own absurdity. Reason fails not, in a loud voice of scorn, to call back any one who attempts to win the praise of *originality* upon a field which Truth herself has once thoroughly illuminated.

As a mere matter of history then it appears, that the writers of ancient Palestine have conquered for themselves, and still hold in undiminished plenitude of power, the regions of religion and morality:—early they utterly routed the champions of polytheism: presently afterwards they gained ascendancy over the sages of Greece and Rome: in modern times they have heaved away the massy and iron-locked structures of a new superstition; and now their absolute authority is admitted by the most intelligent, and the most moral of the nations. By how much does this plain fact fall short of a full proof of the divine origin of the writings?

But it is practicable to ascertain, not only the system taught by the Jewish and Christian

writers; but the actual state of morals among those whom they immediately addressed. The Hebrew prophets furnish abundantly the means of pursuing such an inquiry; and well would the importance of the subject justify the bestowment of minute and laborious attention upon the pregnant materials. But the unadorned simplicity, and the unstudied earnestness of the Apostles, and especially the *epistolary form of their compositions*, render the task of the inquirer peculiarly easy and satisfactory. We have already seen in what way these compositions furnish conclusive inferences in proof of the integrity of the first promulgators of Christianity, and of the reality of its supernatural attestations. One or two instances may now be produced illustrative of the evidence they afford bearing upon the state of morals among the first converts. Of course we are not in an argument of this kind entitled to conclude that these persons were blameless in their lives merely because their teachers address them as "Saints," or affirm that they were "holy." Our inferences must be of a more recondite kind. We must assume nothing but what is necessary to give a common measure of consistency to the writer's assertions:—in other words, we are to assume just as much as is found to be safe and reasonable in the interpretation of any ancient author.

We have seen in his addresses to the Galatians

and Corinthians, that Paul was not the man to wink at, or spare the faults or errors of those to whom he wrote. Every one of his letters affords some example, both of his quick-sightedness, and of his bold sincerity. The generality of men will more easily bear to be charged with vices, or with evil tempers, than to be reproached for dullness of apprehension: but in an epistle addressed, as it seems, to the better informed class of his own nation*, he does not hesitate to blame their inaptitude and non-proficiency.—“Of whom (Melchisedec) we have much to say that is hard to be explained;—at least to persons so dull of apprehension as yourselves; for truly you, who, considering the time, might well have been teachers, have need to be again taught the very rudiments of the divine doctrine; and have come to need milk rather than solid food. For he who is not accomplished in a just mode of argumentation, must be accounted a babe, being fed on milk. But solid food is for one of mature understanding, who by discipline has his faculties exercised in discriminating the true from the false.” Heb. v. 11, 14. This is not the style of a writer whose evidence on the state of manners needs to be suspected. Instances of a similar kind form a prominent characteristic of the writer’s manner.—Let us then hear in what tone he addresses some of the societies to which he wrote.

* See Note.

If a father in writing to a son addresses him in the language of approving affection; and if his admonitions relate only to the graces of an amiable deportment and temper, it is fair to conclude that the character of the son is unstained by grievous vices:—such a letter certainly would not be addressed by a wise parent to a son who was “wasting his substance in riotous living.” This inference would be strongly confirmed if we found the same father writing to another son in terms of mingled affection, remonstrance, and severe reproof; and that he urged upon him, with pungent persuasions, the capital virtues of justice and temperance. Now it is precisely the same sort of inference that we are entitled to draw from Paul’s several epistles. In some of them we see him discharge the painful duty of administering stern reproof on the principal points of common morality; and on these occasions he carries the requirements of virtue as far as can be imagined possible, and enforces these claims by the most awful sanctions. Nor in the application of his standard of morality to particular instances does he show, in the smallest degree, a timid or compromising spirit.—Such then is the writer; and such his system of morals.

But the same moralist in addressing some other societies, writes in the style of a kind and happy father to an exemplary and amiable son. Witness his letters to the Philippians, Thessalonians,

Ephesians, and Colossians. The inference then is direct and plain—unless indeed we are to judge these compositions by some rule framed for themselves, and different from that of common sense—that these societies were in a state not far below the writer's own standard of morals. In every society there must of course be a diversity of character, and in every numerous society there will be individuals to whom a wise teacher will deem it safe to address strongly worded cautions, on the prime articles of morality. We find accordingly some passages of this kind in all these epistles; and they stand forth as the vouchers for the writer's consistency and faithfulness. These more serious admonitions are however manifestly addressed to *a minority*, or to an individual; or they are directed to persons not within the pale of the society.

We turn to an instance or two;—"Take heed of dogs (snarlers, cynics) take heed of mischief-makers: take heed of the (Jewish) precisionists. . . . For there are not a few, of whom I have often spoken to you, and of whom now I speak weeping, whose conduct is such that (though they call themselves Christians) they are in fact the enemies of its fundamental doctrine. Their consummation shall be fatal;—their divinity is their appetite;—their boast is that which truly is their shame;—they are mindful only of their worldly interests." Phil. iii. 2, 18, 19.

“Now we admonish you, brethren, to warn those (of your society) who may be disorderly.”

1 Thess. v. 14. “We command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord (as if so painful a duty needed the highest sanction) to withdraw yourselves from any member whose conduct violates the rules of the society, as you received them from us. For we hear that some among you behave in a disorderly manner, are idle and mischievous. If any one refuses to submit to our injunctions as signified in this letter—mark the man, and exclude him from your familiar converse, that he may be put to shame. And yet deem him not an enemy, but warn him as a brother.” 2 Thess. iii. 6, 11, 14, 15.

These very injunctions, especially when compared with the sweeping censures addressed by Paul to other societies, would alone be enough to prove that the *majority* of the Philippian and Thessalonian Christians was undeserving of serious blame. But let us hear in what terms he writes to them. “I thank my God as often as I think of you . . . and I pray that your mutual affection may more and more abound; *yet with all cognizance and discernment*. So that you may discriminate the good from the bad; and be sincere and faultless in the day of Christ. Only let your behaviour be worthy of the Christian profession: so that whether I come and see you, or be absent and hear of you, you may be firm and of one

- mind, as with one soul unitedly contending to maintain the faith of the Gospel; and not on any occasion intimidated by your adversaries Thus my beloved friends, as you have always hitherto been obedient, not only while I was with you, but even more so during my absence, with fear and trepidation accomplish the work of your own salvation. For it is God who, by an inward influence, incites you both to desire and to do what is pleasing to himself. Do all things without murmuring or disputing, that you may be blameless and inoffensive, as the children of God, liable to no rebuke in the midst of a people both perverse and perverted, among whom you appear as luminaries, enlightening the world, by exhibiting the doctrine of life. In conclusion, my brethren, whatever is true, whatever is venerable, whatever is equitable, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is reputable; if there be any thing virtuous, if any thing praise-worthy;—be mindful of it. And whatever you have learned and received and heard from me, or seen in my example, that do; and the God of peace shall be with you." Philipp. *passim*.

The concluding sentences of this quotation might be compared to the last nice and sedulous touches of an accomplished artist, who having completed an excellent piece of work, reluctantly withdraws his hand while it seems yet possible to add a higher lustre to its polish.

Passages like these, *from such a writer*, whose discrimination and sincerity are abundantly proved, afford the very best kind of evidence which history knows of, in attestation of the eminent attainments of the Philippian Christians, in purity of manners. Those who are the most accustomed to a nice valuation of the various classes of evidence will, if their judgments are not occupied by malignant prejudices, be the first to admit the conclusive force of the inferences derived from *this*. While those who are wont to look only on the surface of things, and who are more easily moved to conviction by what is glaring, than by what is exact, will scarcely perceive its force. Such persons would rather hear the facts roundly affirmed in the style of a declamatory narrator. As for example, thus:—“Christianity was preached by Paul—among other places, at Philippi, in Macedonia. Here it was attended with the most surprising effects:—many persons who lately were dissolute in their manners, became entirely reformed; while those whose conduct had been less reprehensible, assumed no pre-eminence above others:—strict in their manners, yet meek and unpretending, these converts attracted the notice and admiration even of their adversaries; and among themselves they were knit together by pure and warm affection. In their whole behaviour it was apparent that they studied whatever was true, venerable, just,

pure, lovely, reputable, virtuous, and praiseworthy. In a word, they were such as Christianity requires all men to be." This sort of direct affirmation, or positive testimony might indeed be deserving of entire credence; but we should yield that credence on the persuasion of the historians' *veracity*. In the other case, though there is no affirmation, no formal statement of facts; they instantly force themselves on the assent of every intelligent reader, by a process of intuitive reasoning.

The other epistles of Paul, as well as those of James, Peter, and John, might furnish instances to the same effect. The general result would be an irrefragable proof that the teaching of the apostles actually produced a very high degree of conformity to the new, and elevated, and refined standard of morals which they promulgated.—That in many cities of the Roman world, where, formerly, nothing had been seen but shameless dissoluteless, and abominable idolatries; or, at best, Jewish sanctimoniousness, or philosophical pride and absurdity; there were formed societies, collected chiefly from the humbler classes, in which the full loveliness of virtue was suddenly generated and expanded, and produced its fruits. Not only were all the gods expelled by the new doctrine, but all the vices also.

It appears then, as a mere matter of history that, by the authors of the epistles now in our

hands, a new theology and a new morality were made known to mankind ; and this theology and this morality are acknowledged to be so perfect, that nothing can be well added to them, or subtracted. These same epistles contain also a recon-dite, but most conclusive proof of the integrity of the writers, and of the piety and purity of the first Christians.—The system perfect, the teachers honest, the converts virtuous! How much appearance of reason remains then with the man who adds,—but the claim to a divine revelation was false?



CHAPTER XVI.

HINTS TOWARDS AN ANALYSIS OF THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

Christian morals are immediately dependant upon Christian theology; and Christian theology is a system of consequences from certain historical facts, which need to be ascertained before the authority and sanctions of the moral code can be urged upon refractory minds. Hence it is that an argument in its nature purely historical is inseparably, though much to its disadvantage, linked, on the one hand, with all those suasive considerations which belong to the enforcement of right conduct; and on the other, with all those oppug-

nant and vitiated feelings which arm the mind against truth.

The Christian advocate, therefore, who, ordinarily, is by office, the teacher of morals also, finds it difficult or impossible, and perhaps he may think it undesirable, to separate this historical argument from many irrelevant, though in themselves momentous considerations, adapted to the purpose of persuasion. This mode of proceeding is unquestionably highly becoming to the minister of religion who must be "patient towards all," especially as it falls to his part very often to address those who, from the want of preliminary knowledge, or of the requisite powers of mind, are incapable of perceiving the force of mere reasoning. Such persons must in charity be persuaded, though they can never, strictly speaking, be convinced. Yet from this almost constant admixture of persuasive considerations with historical reasonings, there arises, unavoidably, not a little confusion or indistinctness of ideas, affecting one party, and, perhaps, in some degree, the other. How many are there who, mistaking the tones of Christian moderation for an indication of augmentative hesitation, have failed to perceive that, in withholding their assent to the Christian evidences, they act a part which, but for the charitable forbearance of those who labour to draw them from their fatal folly, would expose them only to contempt.

On the other side, perhaps, the same cause insensibly operates to prevent the Christian advocate from trusting to the unencumbered force of his argument:—accustomed to pass from an appeal to the reasoning faculties, to an appeal to the conscience, or the heart, he comes to think that he could hardly dispense with the latter in the establishment of his position. And thus, partly from that modesty which Christianity itself inspires, and partly—may we say it—from the indistinct perception which commonly attends the lively solitudes of a feeling mind in discharging momentous duties, he places his claim on too low a ground, and is willing to concede so far to the infatuation of his opponents as to grant that the truth of Christianity may fairly be questioned. An immense injury is done to the cause of religion by this sort of misplaced moderation. When infidelity is extinguished, we shall reflect with amazement upon the wasted indulgence which has been so long used towards it.

Yet whoever advances, on behalf of the Christian evidences, the just claim they possess to the instant assent of all men, ought not to omit to caution his reader against mistaking the unskilfulness of a writer for an intrinsic defectiveness in the proof. And as it is the duty of every advocate to take care that his own deficiencies be not charged upon his argument; so it is the part of every reader, who would do justice to himself, to dis-

criminate between the reasons and the reasoning; —between the advocate and the cause; remembering that there cannot be a surer indication of a vulgar and perverted mind, than to seize those accidental advantages which an incompetent writer may put into the hands of the adversaries of truth. Premising then this caution, we proceed to offer hints towards such an analysis of the Christian evidences as is necessary to appreciate justly their claims.

A strict analysis of these evidences demands that they should be detached from two peculiarities which distinguish this from every other historical argument. The first, is *the extraordinary character of the events* to which this evidence relates; and the second, is *the extraordinary ordeal to which the original testimony was subjected*. Much misapprehension surrounds both these topics. The first of them we should dispose of by such considerations as the following.—

It is nothing but a prejudice, though it is one not readily dispelled, which leads us to demand a proportion or correspondency in magnitude, or in force, or in amount, between facts and testimony. That is to say, if the facts are extraordinary, or if important consequences result from them, we are prone to seek a correlative enhancement of the evidence which brings them to our knowledge: or if such an enhancement is not to be obtained, we think it *judicious* to withhold

our faith in proportion to the supposed inequality of the two. This rule of belief would be reasonable if such facts were, by any real influence or natural connection linked with the *medium of transmission* by which they are made known in various directions. But it needs scarcely to be said that there is, in fact, no such connection—no such influence. The facts and the evidence are as independant of each other as fortuity can make them. To demand a proportion between them is therefore in the last degree absurd. And as belief or assent is not a matter of choice, but of reason, we have no liberty to frame conditions upon which alone we will make the surrender. It is a mere chance in what way we, as individuals, become informed of remote facts. The most ordinary and the most insignificant events may happen to be affirmed by a superabundance of testimony; while other facts, not less true, though in the highest degree extraordinary or important, may reach the parties most interested in them by a single and unsupported testimony.

But since neither the nature of the facts nor the extent of their consequences is linked to the testimony, the amount of that testimony cannot, with reason, be made the measure of faith.—The bombardment of a town makes itself known to the inhabitants of the surrounding country—on the one side, by the full roar of its thunders; but

in another direction, perhaps, an intervening range of wood-covered hills, so quells the transmission of sound, that the listful fawn of the forest scarcely catches the alarm. Yet the vibration is distinctly perceptible to him who hearkens; and though the clown may not guess its meaning, the experienced soldier doubts not for a moment what may be its cause. Does then a just logic require that the people on the one side should believe, and those on the other doubt the fact of the siege, in mathematical proportion to the intensity of the vibrations that reach the ear? This cannot be; for the difference in the *quantity* of evidence is purely accidental. And certainly, if our faith ought not to be measured by the amount of evidence that may happen to convey to us the knowledge of a remote fact, neither ought it to be regulated by the nature or the consequences of the facts. If the continued discharge of artillery be distinctly, though faintly perceived, our confidence in the fact cannot, in reason, be enhanced or diminished by any supposition relative to the occasion of this firing:—it may be a mere trial of ordnance at an arsenal; or it may be the storming of a fortress, which will issue in the conquest of a province—in the change of a dynasty—in the ruin of an empire.

The only inquiry which reason warrants is, whether the testimony or proof be good of its kind: and if so, it will bear one weight of facts

as safely as another:—it will bear *any* weight, short of a *real* contradiction to facts, known upon evidence still more certain. But as truth is always consistent, such seeming contradictions, whenever they arise, proceed from some precipitation or prejudice on our own part. It were easy to adduce a multitude of examples from ancient history in proof of the futility of the principle which supposes that there ought to be a proportion between evidence and the facts established by it. One, well adapted to our purpose, is afforded by the history to which the first chapters of this volume are devoted. It may be briefly stated as follows.—*

Herodotus informs us that the first expedition sent against Greece by Xerxes, having been almost destroyed by a storm near the dangerous promontory of Mount Athos, the enraged and disappointed monarch, partly to avenge himself on the mountain, and partly to avoid the same hazard for the future, sent a large detachment of his forces to cut a trench through the narrow isthmus which connects the lofty peninsular with the Macedonian continent; so that his fleet, in its coasting progress, might pass from gulph to gulph, without doubling the head-land. But though the width of the isthmus is little more than a mile,

* In a Note the reader will find all the evidence and opinions I have been able to collect on this curious subject.

the labour must have been prodigious, and the design may seem absurd; since the passage of the Ægean sea, in the level of Lemnos, though perilous, was constantly made; nor could the avoidance of this single head-land secure the fleet from other dangers almost equally great. Besides; though Xerxes was in alliance with the king of Macedonia, the country in the immediate neighbourhood was occupied by Greeks; and it might have been anticipated that, even if the work was suffered to be completed, the Athenians would attempt to possess themselves of the spot before the arrival of the Asiatic fleet.

The fact then, of such a work having been attempted, may seem utterly incredible; or at least in a high degree improbable. And accordingly the Roman satirist has singled it out as an instance of the falseness of the Greek writers; and several modern authors—Richardson especially, have not scrupled to affirm that the narrative is utterly unworthy of credit—that is to say, they have sagely *balanced the fact against the evidence*; and though the evidence is *good*, if not abundant, they have found that it wanted some grains of the weight necessary, in their opinion, *to counterpoise the incredibility of the story*. But is this principle of historical inquiry sound and reasonable? We think not.

It is impossible that Herodotus and the Athenians of his time, who were constantly frequent-

ing the coasts of Chalcidene, could be ignorant of the fact: and if no such work was really attempted or executed, he knowingly advanced, and they knowingly admitted a flagrant falsehood: and his testimony is therefore deprived of all value. But the fact is confidently affirmed also by the orators, Lysias and Isocrates; as well as by later writers;—and Thucydides, who, perhaps, beyond any historian, ancient or modern, deserves the praise of cautious veracity, and who had held a government, and actually possessed estates in the very neighbourhood, makes that sort of familiar mention of the canal which implies that it was well known to his readers,* and still in existence. Now though this evidence is not very ample, it is very explicit; and if it were estimated without regard to the supposed incredibility of the fact in question, it would be allowed by every one to be unexceptionable: if, therefore, we must indeed reject it, violence is done—not merely to the character of this or that historian, but to the common principles of historical evidence. The sceptics, in this instance, would hardly profess that there is *no testimony*

* ‘After the capture of Amphipolis, Brasidas, with the allied army, under his command, proceeded to Acta, a region extending inwards from the trench dug by the Persian king, and terminated by the lofty summit of Mount Athos.’ Thucyd. iv. 109.

that could command their assent; for example. —If that portion of the Geography of Strabo which has unfortunately perished, and which is known (by the Epitome) to have contained the description of Mount Athos, were to be recovered, and if in it were found a particular account of the vestiges of the trench, as observed by himself; or if some modern traveller, more diligent than Pococke, were to discover such vestiges, then perhaps they would think *the balance of proof* to be turned in favour of the evidence, and they would grant, what, before they had denied; which would be equivalent to an admission that their *principle* was fallacious, and had actually deceived them.

Such an admission as this must indeed be forced upon those who adopt the principle in question as often as some *new evidence* dispels an apparent improbability in the narratives of historians: it ought then to be utterly rejected in historical investigations. Our part is to estimate and scrutinize, as carefully as we can, *the validity of the proofs*:—not to weigh the probability of the facts;—a task to which we can scarcely ever be competent. Still less ought unexceptionable testimony to be neutralized by *hypothetical* assertions of some improbability in the facts. Now the assertion that the extraordinary facts of the gospel history are improbable, is purely hypothetical;—*you* think them so; I think them *intrinsically*

worthy of belief: meantime we must both admit that the evidence, viewed apart from the facts, is perfect in its kind; and with this alone we have to do.

The considerations above-mentioned are applicable to historical investigations at large; but something more must be added in behalf of the Christian evidences. It may readily be granted to be possible that events may take place so far surpassing the known course of nature and of human affairs, that they must be held to pass *also* beyond the limits of human invention, or of imposture, or delusion. In such a case it would be immaterial by what means these events were made known; since they carry with them their own evidence, and supercede all external proof. Such events, we boldly affirm, are the miracles recorded in the gospels—commanding the assent of every unpervverted mind, and giving to the Christian teacher a full right over the consciences of all men, whether or not their previous knowledge, or their present opportunities, allow of their receiving the historical proof of the truth of the facts.

Whoever is duly informed of the state of mankind in ancient times, and is aware of the invariable character of the preternatural events or prodigies which were talked of among the Greeks, Romans, and Asiatics (the Jews excepted, whose notions were derived from another source) must

allow that the miracles recorded to have been performed by Christ and his apostles, differ totally from all such portents and prodigies. The beneficent restorations which followed the word or the touch of Him who came "not to destroy life, but to save," were, if the expression may be allowed, perfectly in the style of the Creator: they held forth such exhibitions of an absolute controul over the material world as were most significant of the power of the doctrine to restore health to the soul. If the idea of the morality taught by Christ was absolutely new; so likewise was the idea of the miracles performed by him to enforce it. If the morality was worthy of the Divine Being, so were the miracles. If the morality was too pure and too perfect to be attributed even to the wisest of mankind in that age (much less to impostors) the miracles also were too grandly simple, and too beneficent to have been imagined even by the sages of the times (much less by pretenders.)

Were there room to doubt what is the character of the native imaginations of enthusiasts—of fanatics—of interested priests, when they have devised the means of giving credit to their fraudulent usurpations over the consciences of their fellows, we might read the history of superstition in ancient Egypt, India, and Greece: or if that were not enough, we might turn to the history of those "lying wonders" upon which the mi-

nisters of the Romish religion in modern times have rested their pretensions. So natural, and almost inseparable, is the connection between imposture and extravagance—between falsehood and absurdity, that though a new and higher idea of supernatural interpositions had been given to the world by Christianity, and though this idea was constantly present to the minds of the popish wonder-mongers, it was more than they could do to adhere to the excellent pattern. No sooner were miraculous powers withdrawn from the church, than the original propensity of the human mind, when wedded to error, re-appeared, and displayed itself with tenfold extravagance, in every form of monstrous folly.

The gospel miracles stand out therefore, from the uniform history of false religions, just as the gospel morality stands out from the history of all other ethical systems. They alone are worthy of the Creator;—and that alone is worthy of the Supreme Lawgiver. Instead then of admitting that stronger evidence is necessary to attest the extraordinary facts recorded in the New Testament than is deemed sufficient in the common path of history, we assert their *intrinsic independence of external proof*: and we affirm, that no sound and well informed mind could fail to attribute them to the Divine Agent, even though all historical evidence were absent. Nothing is so reasonable as to believe that the miracles and

discourses of Jesus were "from God;" nothing so absurd as to suppose them to have been "of men."

The *second* peculiarity of the Christian evidences, namely—the extraordinary ordeal to which the first testimony was submitted, may be separated from the historical argument by attending to the following distinctions.—

If, as we have before had occasion to remark, truth may more safely be gathered up, than demanded, it may certainly be added that it is always more safely demanded than extorted. The practice of examination by torture, which, till of late, all governments have resorted to for the discovery of concealed facts, is perhaps, of all modes of inquiry, the most fallacious—and it is often fatally fallacious; for while it utterly fails to accomplish its purpose when applied to the stubborn and the strong; from the weak and the pusillanimous, it is much more likely to wrench dangerous falsehoods, than simple truths. For as falsehood is multifarious and truth single, the former will almost always offer to the excruciated witness more ready means of obtaining instant relief, than the latter. The passions, not the reason of statesmen, have so long and so generally given credit to a judicial usage—not more ferocious than delusive.

On this principle, obviously true as it is, it may seem, at first sight, as if the extreme sufferings inflicted on the first Christians, and which are commonly adduced as furnishing a corroboration of their testimony, ought, in strictness, to be considered as lessening its value. But a little attention to the circumstances of the case will shew that the seeming disadvantage is not real; and that, if the consideration of these sufferings is detached from the argument, a strong and valid plea is *relinquished*; not an encumbrance or a difficulty avoided. The history of the early persecutions justifies the following inferences.—

1. Excepting a few instances—such, for example, as that of the two Bithynian women examined by Pliny, the sufferings endured by the first Christians were not at all of the nature of *forensic tortures*, or examinations by force, for the discovery of facts. In those cases which properly come under this description, persons seized on suspicion by a government, are, in no sense, voluntary victims, unless they choose rather to suffer in silence than to make such disclosures as may gain their release. If, therefore, such unhappy persons give any evidence at all, it is offered as the price of relief; and the barter is made under the very pressure of pain. But the first Christians, in the great majority of instances, were voluntary victims before the infliction of tortures; for they had, almost always, ample

opportunity of evading examination, and infliction, by simply denying their former profession, and complying with the polytheistic rites. They therefore gave their testimony *freely*; and instead of its being extorted as a means of deliverance from suffering, it was offered in the fearful anticipation of pain; which demands perhaps more courage, or more conscience; and at any rate is not liable to the suspicion that belongs to testimony given on the rack. Evidence by torture is invalid, because it entirely wants that very quality which chiefly gives value to testimony, namely, *spontaneity*:—but the Christian testimony was, in most cases, absolutely spontaneous.

2. But it may be thought that sufferings for conscience sake, by inspiring enthusiasm, confer upon the victim the courage and fortitude which carry him through the trial: and that this may take place even when the cause is bad.—This must be granted; and hence it follows that it is unsafe to infer from the voluntary endurance of suffering either the truth of the opinions in support of which it is endured, or even the purity of the motives which sustain the resolution of the sufferer. Yet it must be remembered that, though the courage of martyrdom, displayed by a few bold leaders of a party, or by a small number of persons whose passions are susceptible of extraordinary excitement, may proceed from nothing better than pride, ambition, stubbornness,

or a half-insane extravagance of mind ; when such sufferings spread widely and last long, and fall upon persons of various tempers, ranks, and habits, they incontestably prove, not perhaps the truth of the opinions, but the sincerity of the parties, and the force of the conviction with which the opinions are held. This must be granted :— and how much soever a few anomalous instances of super-human fortitude may perplex the philosopher, common sense proclaims that when the young, the old, the infirm, the delicate, the timid, gain a mastery over the swellings of their fears, and refuse deliverance under the anguish of torture, and when such things take place, not in a moment ; or on a day of tumultuous exaltation, but through a course of time, in the same city, and province, there must be with the sufferers an honest and deep-felt persuasion of the goodness of their cause. Now it is certain (from the testimony of adversaries even) that the first persecutions swept like a storm with undistinguishing fury through the Christian societies, and there happens to be the most conclusive evidence to prove that it was not the strong or enthusiastic only, who were urged to suffer by their convictions. There were, under all the persecutions, multitudes of Christians whose strength of mind was only sufficient to support them in the onset of trial ;— when seized they owned the name ; but as soon as the frightful apparatus of torture appeared,

they renounced their profession, bowed to the image of the god, and accepted deliverance. These instances give sufficient proof of a pusillanimous spirit; while, at the same time, so near an approach to the appalling engines of pain on the part of those whose fortitude was so slender, furnished perhaps a more striking and conclusive attestation of *sincere conviction*, than even the actual sufferings of more robust or magnanimous confessors.

But again:—there were, in the first age, not a few who gave proof in a different way at once of the feebleness of their natures, and of the sincerity of their convictions. There were some in whom the first agony of fear so quelled the spirit, and broke down principle, that, when seized by the mob or the officers, they eagerly renounced the fatal profession—"We are not Christians—we worship the gods."—And yet when this first dismay had subsided, conscience regained its voice, and drove the still trembling apostates to the tribunal: there, within hearing of the sighs of their more constant companions—within sight of the horrific processes of lingering deaths, they renounced their renunciation, and exclaimed—"We also are Christians—we come to suffer with our brethren." These persons, surely, infirm as they were in body, or mind, or both, acted under the impulse of sincere conviction. Yet we have admitted that such sufferings afford no proof of the truth of the

opinions on account of which they were endured; for error *in matters of opinion* may take full possession of the reason and conscience. But was the faith of the first Christians a matter of *opinion*?—Assuredly not. Not more so than the belief that such and such was their vocation—such and such their relatives; or that they were then called to suffer.

This, however, is not our immediate object:—we now only affirm, for the reasons above stated, that the sufferings of the first Christians cannot be held to *invalidate* their testimony. This is enough; for it is better that an advantage should be relinquished, than that any pretext should be left for supposing that the Christian evidences are not to be dealt with on the *common principles* of historical proof. If an opponent refuses to accede to this proposition for levelling the argument, we shall consider this refusal as a tacit though disingenuous acknowledgment of defeat; inasmuch as he thereby confesses that he cannot maintain his infidelity if the question is to be argued on any known and established principles. And then we shall return to the position we have left, and assert the *adequacy* of this peculiar evidence to support any weight of consequences;—and the *intrinsic credibility* of the miracles;—and the *enhanced* value of the testimony of the martyrs. —Our opponent may choose his alternative.

The historian of Christianity who would avoid treading on the ground proper to the theologian, will recognize, in collecting his materials, no distinction between *sacred* and *profane* writings; between the canonical, or inspired, and the uninspired books. Whatever literary monuments of antiquity throw light upon the origin and progress of the great revolution that has passed upon the opinions and sentiments of the western nations, will be assigned to the place proper to them in the mass of evidence; nor will he exclude from that mass either the misrepresentations of adversaries, or the ill-judged frauds of friends. Literary forgeries, exaggerated narratives, ill-judged apologies, absurd errors, or puerile refutations of such errors, all contribute their several particles towards a knowledge of the causes which have new-modelled the religious and social systems of half the world.

A point must be fixed later than which it would be useless to commence the retrograde history of Christianity. And it seems natural to choose the moment when the new doctrine first effected a visible change in the political condition of the Roman world. From that time, with scarce an interval, Christianity has held a place in the policy of nations, and its history is inseparable from that of the state. It was, therefore, to be expected, that at the conjuncture when this religion took its seat by the throne, and became a

party in almost all transactions, it should also be admitted upon the page of common history. In other words, that writers should appear who, in the style and spirit of *secular historians*, should go back to the origin of the system ; and give to the world a connected narrative of its commencement and progress. It is then only in the ordinary course of things that we find in the fourth and fifth centuries, *and not before*, writers like Eusebius and his successors, Sozomen, Socrates, and Sulpicius. Traditionary history, when it is ample, consistent, and *apparently* derived from authentic sources, has always been respected by the most competent judges of this kind of evidence. We adhere, therefore, strictly to acknowledged principles in affirming that, if no materials were extant of earlier date than the works of the bishop of Cæsarea, they, with those of his successors, above mentioned, ought to be deemed amply sufficient to justify an intelligent belief of the Christian history. More especially because the account given by those writers of the origin of the new morality and the new theology, is the only one which, knowing as we do the previous condition of mankind, can be admitted as probable.

Whatever arguments are founded upon the excellence of the morality, the purity of the theology, the sufferings of the martyrs, the spread of the doctrine through the world, and its eventual

triumph over polytheism, false philosophy, and state policy, may be drawn, abundantly and safely, from these later authors. Or if it were wished to obtain some conclusive and unexceptionable confirmation of this traditionary evidence, we should find what we want by admitting among our materials the works of the emperor Julian. The writings of this zealous polytheist form—so to speak—a band of brass, tightly girding round the looser materials of ecclesiastical history, and giving to the whole an indissoluble firmness. We are so much accustomed to look higher than to the *traditionary* history of Christianity, and to argue its truth alone upon its *original* documents, that we forget the impregnable strength of the out-works. Not from the affectation of a singular hardihood; but purely from a due respect to the well-proved principles of historical science, we should choose—if we met an opponent willing to follow wherever reason leads—to affirm and establish the truth of Christianity upon its *traditionary* history; taking the works of Eusebius, of Sulpicius, and of Julian, as the sole materials of the argument; and giving to those of the emperor the place of honour, as the ultimate authority, or arbiter in the debate. Or we would confidently accept a challenge to prove the divine origin of Christianity from the writings of the apostate alone; provided only that no supposition drawn from sources foreign to history, were admitted to

influence the argument. It is perfectly well known what were the religious sentiments of the Greeks in the brightest time of their philosophy: but here we find Julian—a zealous admirer of the same philosophy, and a devout worshipper of the same abominable fiends, addressing *pastoral* letters, forsooth, to magistrates, and to the high priests of the gods, which letters are filled with notions and principles of conduct as unlike those known to Xenophon, to Plato, and to Cicero, as the sentiments of the hymns of Madam Guion, are unlike the spirit that breathes in the lyrics of Pindar. The imperial preacher—ineffable folly!—gravely enjoins the foul ministers of Jupiter, of Mercury, and of Venus, to addict themselves to devout meditations! to prayers! to night-watchings and fastings! and to mortifications of the flesh!—to alms’ deeds and works of charity! and then, this prince of plagiarists, as if to cloke his theft, upbraids these priests with the superior purity, diligence, and benevolence of the “ex-ecrable Galileans!”

And this zealous emperor, after thus giving an implicit summary of Christian Ethics, and an unwilling testimony to the superiority of Christian practices, distinctly admits that the Galilean doctrine had been established by the aid of miracles—which he attributes to magical powers. This is all we need for the argument. Julian had received a Christian education;—he was well ac-

quainted with the then existing documents of the faith, and knew that *a claim to miraculous powers had been made by its founders*. The affirmations then of Eusebius, on the most material point, receive the highest possible confirmation. It is certain, from a comparison of these authors alone, that the perfect Ethics and the pure Theology before which the dæmons of Greece and Rome had fallen, sprung up and spread along with *the profession of miracles*. We defy sophistry to explain these unquestionable facts, while the reality of those miracles is denied.

The writings above named compose then the first portion of the Christian evidences—taking the history in the order which the line of argument demands. To concede this first portion, would indicate weakness of judgment, and confusedness of perception; since it stands as firm as any similar body of evidence in existence, and offers, to the full, as fair an appearance of authenticity as can be claimed for a very large portion of ancient history. The advocate who timidly recedes from *this* ground, will be driven from the next—and from the next: and the assailant who breaks over it, will respect none of the bulwarks of truth.

Our second resting-place on the path of investigation may properly be fixed at the period when the founders of Christianity and their immediate successors had passed away; when the doctrine,

in new hands, had firmly established itself in almost every town of the Roman world; when several men endowed with secular learning had arisen in the sect, and had thrown off, in their writings, an image of the system, coloured to the hues of their own minds; when it had been attacked by acute and learned adversaries; and when its adherents were still contemned, proscribed, and persecuted. The writings of Cyprian lead this second portion of our materials; and with his are associated the works of Origen, of Tertullian, of Clemens Alexandrinus, of M. Felix, of Novatian, and the fragments of Porphyry.*

* It would be hard to determine whether the mere labour of perusal, or the greater labour of exercising perpetually a sound discrimination, has had most influence in producing, in our own times, an easy acquiescence in the common opinion that—‘the works of the Fathers will not repay the toil of reading.’—The adversaries of Christianity,* when incited by the desire of heaping contempt and reproaches upon the memory of just men, have not thought that toil too great. Or do we shrink from the task of looking, for ourselves, into the original materials of church history from a latent fear that our faith in Christianity itself should be shaken by meeting with difficulties or embarrassments in its after-history from which we are not prepared to disengage ourselves? He who feels a fear of this kind has never distinctly apprehended the force of the Christian evidence, and is ever in peril of being driven upon the reefs of infidelity. It must indeed be confessed that the writings of the early Christian divines rest under a heap

* Bayle; Gibbon.

—The precise use which the historical inquirer will make of the authors above named may be thus explained.—In every long series of events, which, from small beginnings, have expanded widely and variously—affecting the opinions and practices of many nations; there must, of course, be found what may be called a *convergency* of all the facts towards their common centre. The scattered materials of a late age form—so to speak—the broken portions of a large periphery, whose radii all indicate the same generative point. As we ascend to the next age, the materials it furnishes evidently take their place as the parts of a smaller circle; and so on, till we reach the originating point of these concentric

of repulsive disadvantages. Many of them have, unquestionably, suffered extensive injuries from the fraudulent practices of the Romish clergy.—And the reputation of many of these writers has been hurt by the association of manifestly spurious productions with their genuine works; and perhaps still more by the indiscretion of foolish and fanatical biographers. And, no doubt, a profitable perusal of these authors (as of any writers remote from ourselves by time and habits of thought) requires a power to dismiss the fixed impression of modern notions—to pass back, with an *unshackled* imagination, to the distant and dissimilar scenes of primitive Christianity—and to extricate whatever is good and universal, from whatever is partial and temporary.—In a word, we must be willing to read these authors just with that intelligent candour, which we have so much reason to desire the men of future times may possess, should the religious history and theology of our own age survive for their perusal.

orbits. Now, *the true nature* of the central or generative cause, will conspicuously appear by observing the nature of the changes that take place in our progression towards it.—If it were permitted us to pass, with the flight of an archangel, along the radius of our planetary system—commencing our progress from the most remote of its orbs; at each stage—from world to world—an augmentation of light, and an increase of pleasurable warmth would be perceived. And how striking would be the comparison between the most distant, and the most proximate of these several resting-places! Could it be doubted that we were drawing nigh to the common fountain of light and heat?—In the dim sphere where the sun is reckoned only to be the brightest star in the dark sky, how sad and chill was the day—how little to be preferred to the night! But in the world whose orbit girts the sun, and where the blazing disk fills a half of the heavens, all is dazzling splendour—the planet floats in an effulgent flood;—and a pregnant energy of warmth pervades all things!

If the imagination were as sensibly affected by moral ideas as it is by material images, the simile would lose none of its force in being applied to the history of Christianity.—Let the many abuses, and the many errors, and the many follies of the Christians of the fourth century be brought to light:—let the infidel aid us with his

diligence and zeal in this work of exposure.—How lax were the morals of the Christians of Constantinople, of Alexandria, and especially of Antioch, in the time of Chrysostom! How arrogant, ambitious, contentious, and indulgent, were many of the clergy! How little was the unity of the spirit preserved by the bond of charity! And how fanatical and absurd were the recluses of Egypt, of Syria, and of Thrace! With all these evils before him, one almost excuses the apostacy of Julian. But we ascend to the times of the persecutions under Diocletian, Gallienus, and Decius; and we find, though conjoined with many of the same disorders in an incipient state, the indications of a more strict and highly toned morality, and of a more lively piety. In this higher age there were, among the Christians, men of great learning and distinguished powers of mind; and some who had shone in public life before their conversion; and who display in their writings, not only the qualities and accomplishments of their minds, but a deep-felt conviction of the goodness of their cause, a high degree of devotedness of spirit, an honest zeal in reproof and repressing abuses, and in asserting the obligations of essential morality. And this zeal received, in many of them, the confirmation of martyrdom. In the same age, also, there were multitudes of private Christians who offered their lives—if not with the simplicity

and meekness of their predecessors, yet with a noble constancy: and, as if taught by the onset of suffering, some, in whose previous conduct there had been much that needs candour, died in a spirit that demands unmingled admiration.—Do we not sensibly approach the great centre of high virtue and true wisdom?

From the age of Cyprian we ascend to that of Polycarp, Justyn Martyr, and Irenæus. All that artlessness and infirmity of judgment, or seeming want of frigid discretion, which may offend the modern reader in perusing the remains of the early Christian writers, is accepted by the historical inquirer as a certain indication that he has not missed his path in pursuing the history of Christianity towards its source. For in comparing the materials belonging to this period with those of the third century, there is apparent, just that higher degree of simplicity, we might say *crudeness*, and plainness, and fervour, which the nature of the case leads us to expect. Christianity, as it was not left by its founders in the hands of philosophers and statesmen, so neither was it committed to the charge of men who, by an especial aid from above, preserved the freshness, and vigour, and calmness, of the best good sense, under the influence of the highest imaginable excitements. By persecutions and incessant perils always driven along the very verge of this mortal scene, and

having before them, in their own doctrine, the vastness of eternity, with its infinite of happiness or woe, the apostles and their companions exhibit a tranquil sobriety of judgment which could be expected only from men under the most ordinary circumstances, entertaining the most frigid dogmas:—the practical instructions of Peter, and of James, are not exceeded in *calm propriety* by those of the modern teacher, whose monotonous course of life, whose dull imagination, and whose sober opinions, remove from him every element of excitement. But the successors of the apostles, while they inherited the same kindling belief of the unseen world, and were exposed to the same persecutions, were not upheld by the same supernatural influence: they acted, therefore, and wrote, as *men*, believing such things, and suffering such things, might be supposed to act and write. Yet what was most peculiar to Christianity, namely, the spirit of mutual affection, an exalted morality, an unwearied zeal for the good of their fellows, and, above all, a confident and unwavering hope of immortality, a hope stronger than the love of life, and than the fear of torments, appear not less conspicuously among these men than those. The apparent difference between the apostles and their successors is such only as is occasioned by a difference in the reflecting body;—the image is the same, the glorious light is the same. Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenæus, Justin,

and hundreds of their disciples, like Stephen, James, Peter, Paul, and their companions, gave, by their discourses, their conduct through life, and their deaths, the highest proof which human nature has the means of offering, of sincerity: and the proof of their sincerity is inseparable from the goodness of their cause.

The writings of the early fathers, with the testimony of Pliny and Tacitus, which belong to the same period, taken as the vouchers for the authenticity of the later historians, bring the Christian evidence fully up to the level of ordinary history. Very few points of history rise above this level. The conquests of Alexander in Asia, the conquests of the Romans before the time of Polybius; or such matters as the legislation of Lycurgus, or even that of Solon, or the life and institutes of Pythagoras, fall below, and some of them very far below it. If *these* materials for a history of Christianity are rejected as insufficient, we demand an intelligible and probable ground of objection against them: and this objection must be drawn from the *admitted principles of historical evidence*—not from the dogmas of a speculative philosophy, which one man may think very sound, and very ingenious; but which, to another, seem no better than doting follies. Until such an objection has been made good, the Christian advocate cannot, in logical equity, be required to defend his ultimate position. With

all their faults of style, the (genuine) epistles of Polycarp, the epistle of the churches of Lyons and Vienne, the apologies of Justin Martyr, and, to ascend higher, the epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, are fraught with sentiments proper to sincere and pious men. And it is altogether a gratuitous calumny, and a violence to evidence, to impute to them that character which must have been theirs if Christianity had been otherwise than true. Nothing suggests or demands a supposition so injurious, except the argumentative difficulties in which the infidel is involved. With these difficulties we leave him to contend, assured that, between unfounded theories on the one hand, or unfounded calumnies on the other, he will never find an alternative.

In proceeding to mention the ultimate materials of Christian history, a preliminary remark must be made. No preposterous error can long exist in the world without disturbing the judgment, even of those who most strenuously oppose it. For the refutation of a preposterous error leads perpetually to that most disheartening species of argumentation—the *reductio ad absurdum*, which, in fact, is a reasoning with those who have renounced the authority of reason : — and a contest on terms so unequal must be highly disadvantageous to the champion of the better cause. This sort of disparagement and disturbance of ideas has always, more or less, belonged

to the argument on the Christian evidences, which have never found an equitable antagonist. If the reader thinks this assertion too large, let him search the catalogue of infidel writers, from Celsus to Paine, and name even *one*, who, for plain and honest simplicity of manner, for calm research, for *explicitness*, and for an abstinence from *foul* methods of producing impression, can be compared with Minutius, Felix, Grotius, Watson, or Paley. The reason is obvious:—no man of upright simplicity and intelligence has ever bestowed attention upon the Christian evidence, and rejected it. But the consequence of having to contend only with reckless and malignant sophists is this, that the argument has been drawn very far aside from the direct line to which a purely historical inquiry should adhere. To prove what needs not to be proved, is to make an ill-judged and unavailing concession to a foolish or perverse antagonist. If asked why he believes the miracles and resurrection of Christ, the Christian is bound to give no other answer than the simple one, that—these facts are recorded by respectable contemporary historians. He who is not content with this reply is bound, for his own sake, to seek further information. Meanwhile, all reasonable men are quite satisfied to read Luke as they read Thucydides;—being convinced that both records were published while many of the actors in the scenes described were living—

that both authors, by their manner and the sentiments they advance, make good a claim to the respect of posterity, as honest memorialists of transactions concerning which they had made it their business to obtain accurate information; and that the affirmations of both are abundantly corroborated by a various mass of independent testimony.

The validity of the *secondary* materials, before mentioned, may very fairly be made the subject of elaborate discussion; but when the *original* documents of the Christian history are so treated, the very grounds on which any remote events may be proved are given up. If the same concessions were made to one who denied the truth of the Peloponnesian war, the advocate of Thucydides would find that he had no means of argument left in his hands. The *mutual* error which impels the infidel to ask such concessions and which inclines the Christian advocate to yield them, will be found to resolve itself into the prejudice adverted to at the commencement of this chapter. It is affirmed on one side, and implicitly granted on the other, that there ought to be a *counterpoise* between facts and testimony; and as the parties cannot agree in adjusting the balance, the controversy can never be determined. For what avails good evidence—even the best that can be imagined—the best that has ever been offered,—if the facts are thought to *outweigh*, in

magnitude or importance, even by a single grain, the whole amount of proof:—and who shall say when the beam is precisely level; since the very agitation of the question keeps it in constant oscillation?—now the facts prevail; and now the evidence: meanwhile infidelity finds for itself an excuse. All this trifling we utterly reject and condemn. The existence of the Gospels, such as they are, supersedes every reasonable doubt.

These primitive records, when compared with the testimony of the early fathers, serve the important purpose of demonstrating that the claim to a divine commission *attested by miracles*, was not added to Christianity by the successors of the apostles. For the Great Teacher himself, whose more than human wisdom, whose perfect precepts, whose holy life, and beneficence, have, in every age, compelled the veneration of mankind, *declares himself the worker of miracles*:—the companions of his ministry do the same. All middle suppositions, all accommodating theories, are then excluded. If this claim, was a pretension, what is our alternative?—an alternative never sincerely adopted by a human mind.

In urging the proof which arises from the fulfilment of prophecy—a proof that can never be too strongly urged, it is not unusual to advance some sentiment like the following—“ Prophecy, as it is gradually accomplished, seems intended to sup-

ply the gradual diminution of the evidence resulting from miracles." But what is this supposed diminution or decay of the proof from miracles! Surely the phrase, when applied to *recorded matters of history*, is absolutely devoid of meaning. Pillars of marble decay, and monuments of brass decay; the Egyptian pyramids are crumbling into dust: the earth itself wanes, and "the heavens become old as a garment;" but WRITTEN TESTIMONY endures from age to age, and knows no change; and so long as reason is the guide of man, whatever is established by that testimony holds an undecaying authority over his belief. It is true, we do not see the miracles of Christ; but we see the claim to miraculous power interwoven with his discourses: and while we feel it to be impossible to resist the conviction that these discourses are the words of "a teacher sent from God," we must admit at the same time the truth of the claims to supernatural attestations.

There yet remains another step to be ascended on the scale of historical proof—namely, that formed by the existing letters of the founders of Christianity: for it is evident, that, how conclusive soever history may be, documents of this latter kind possess the same weight, and some also peculiar to themselves; inasmuch as there is in them more of those qualities which constitute the strength of testimony—namely, spontaneity, incidental allusion, indirect proof of the character

of the writer, and the explicitness which belongs to an address to individuals. For these reasons the apostolic epistles stand as the *ultimate* materials of the Christian evidences. Among these, even, there is a gradation which ought not to be overlooked.—For example, the first epistle of John bears the character of a treatise addressed at large to all Christians; and, therefore, though it affords proof of the high-toned morality known in the community, it stands lowest on the scale of *specific* evidences. Next to this come the epistles of James, of Jude, and of Paul to the Hebrews, addressed, at large, to the Jewish converts:—these also leave no room for uncertainty on the spirit and practices of the first Christians, and especially establish the daring sincerity of the writers, in reproving faults among their followers. The two epistles of Peter, and that of Paul to the Galatians, stand next in order; and recommend themselves to the inquirer by the peculiarity of being addressed to the scattered communities of several provinces.—This mode of address, at once open and specific, implies, perhaps, more than any other, the security felt by the writers against the attempts of adversaries to expose unfounded pretensions, or suspicious conduct. The epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, take the next place: and in being directed to the societies of certain cities, it may

be presumed that the writer knew pretty well the dispositions and circumstances of those to whom he speaks: in these epistles, therefore, particular and individual allusions more abound; and the means of establishing conclusive inferences are more ample. The letters to individuals, namely, those to Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and the second and third of John's epistles, conclude the series of materials, and leave nothing to be wished for that might serve to throw light upon the origin of Christianity, or to place beyond doubt the character of its founders.

Even this hasty review of the series of the Christian evidences is sufficient to prove that it comprises *every species of written testimony which history knows of*. And we have seen that this body of evidence is especially abundant in that very kind of composition which ranks highest among the means of ascertaining the truth of remote facts. And if the light of testimony shines thus clearly and fully *within* the enclosure of the Christian history, so likewise is there a broad day-light of evidence on all sides of this series of events. Few persons, perhaps, give due attention to the relative position of the Christian history, which stands upon the very point of intersection where three distinct lines of history meet—namely, the Jewish, the Grecian, and the Roman. These three bodies of ancient literature, alone, have descended, by an uninterrupted channel of trans-

mission to modern times; and these three, by a most extraordinary combination of circumstances, were brought together to elucidate the origination of Christianity. If, upon the broad field of history there rests the common light of day, upon that spot where a new religion was given to man there shines the intensity of a concentrated brightness. . Well might the first teachers make the challenge—"We are not of the night, but of the day;"—well might the Founder himself, in bringing his doctrine to the earth, affirm,—“he that doeth truth *cometh to the light*, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.”

Besides the earlier Hebrew literature of Moses and the Prophets, there still exists, in the writings called Apocryphal—in the more ancient Rabbinical commentaries, and in the works of Josephus—(a Jew by birth—a Greek by education—and a Roman by habits, interests, and intercourse) the most ample means of ascertaining the entire compass of Jewish notions and manners at the time of Christ's ministry. What the people of Palestine were, and of what they were capable, is as perfectly known as the opinions and manners of our ancestors at the time of the English Reformation. But just at the same period the Jewish people were—so to speak—planted on the bed of Greek literature. By their subjection to the successors of Alexander, or by

their wars with those princes, and by their ecdemic habits, the wall of partition between themselves and the Greeks had been, to a great extent, broken down;—their youth read the poets, philosophers, and historians of Greece. Doors were open on all sides through which Christianity presently suffused itself through the Greek cities in Asia, Europe, and Africa; so that instead of being shut up in the language of Palestine, and immured in the synagogues, it came directly in contact with the Greek philosophy and worship. Whatever then in the *Greek* literature of that age elucidates the opinions and manners of the times, is really a light shining round the walls of the Christian temple.

Yet this is not all; for at the very same moment, another, and a perfectly distinct language, literature, and history, were brought athwart the origination of Christianity. Judæa was then a Roman province.—During more than a century—in the centre of which stands the ministry of Christ—the affairs of the Syrian nations attracted the peculiar attention of the Roman government. We look therefore again at the very same objects, in a new and a differently coloured mirror. In the brief and supercilious allusions or more explicit narratives of the Latin writers, we read what the Jews of that age were. If then, on some points, the first set of writers leaves a degree of obscurity, it is dispelled by the second; or it is

scattered by the third. No other people of antiquity can be named upon whose history and sentiments there falls this *triple* flood of historic light: and upon no period in the history of this one people do these triple rays so precisely meet as upon the moment when the voice of one was heard in the wilderness of the Jordan, saying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

To affirm then that Christianity sprung up in the night of remote ages—that it is highly difficult, or impracticable, to ascertain whence it originated, and that—like the deepest secrets of nature—it rests under an impenetrable veil, and must for ever baffle the sagacity of man to determine the validity of its claims—to affirm this, is a gross affectation, as well as a broad untruth; and he who offers a pretext like this to palliate the obstinacy of his unbelief, may fairly be classed with those—and there are many such—who love their infatuations better than themselves. It is altogether an *overdone modesty* to retreat and shrink from this argument on the plea of its intricacy, or on the pretence that the inquiry is hopeless;—for a multitude of men in every age, as cautious and as *modest* as any infidels, *have* attained a perfect conviction of the truth of Christianity, and in proof of their sincerity have spent and laid down their lives in its service.

A proposition that is not *doubtful* is, of course,

either manifestly false or manifestly true. But the Gospel history is not *manifestly false*, for the wisest and most learned of mankind have declared for its truth—and the most enlightened, and the most free of all modern nations adheres firmly to the profession of its truth. And those among us whose secular interests are not in the remotest manner implicated in the maintenance of this profession are not at all less zealous than others in its support—all this could not be, if Christianity were incapable of defence—in other words—manifestly false.

What remains then? The Gospel history cannot be deemed inexplicable; and it is not manifestly false.—It is then manifestly true. And though there are still, and may yet be those who, so long as the argument rests quietly in books, will continue to spurn reason; the time will come when attention towards it shall be quickened;—men shall feel their personal interest in the question—the films of sophistry shall be broken as the gossamer of the morning by the foot of behemoth.—The common conviction shall be strong and loud, and shall bear down, with a crushing force, upon the band of malignants whom truth could never move. The time shall come—perhaps it is not distant—when, of all the errors that have made sport of the human mind, the most strange, as well as the most fatal, shall seem—the disbelief of Christianity.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.



NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

Page 12, *.

THE works of Hellanicus disappeared in early times; but having been very frequently quoted by ancient authors, some idea of his subjects and manner may be formed. Cicero—De Oratore ii. 53, seems to intimate that Hellanicus, like many early historians, did no more than make a collection of annals, unadorned by the graces of eloquence.—“Erat enim historia nihil aliud, nisi *annalium confectio*—hanc similitudinem scribendi multi secuti sunt, qui sine ullis ornamentis, monumenta solum temporum, hominum, locorum, gestarumque, reliquerunt. Itaque qualis apud Græcos, Pherecydes, Hellanicus, Acusilas, fuit, aliiq; permulti, talis,” &c.—Thucydides blames Hellanicus for his brevity and want of chronological accuracy, at least in one portion of his work—*βραχεως τε και τοις χρονοις ουκ ακριβως επεμνησθη*. i. 97. Diodorus classes him with those early writers who incline too much to the fabulous—*οι μεν γαρ περι τον Ελλανικον και Καδμον, επι δε Εκαταιον, και παντες οι τοιουτοι παλαιοι, πανταπασιν οντες εις τας μυθωδεις αποφασεις απεκλιναν*. i. page 23. Josephus—Answer to Apion—speaks of him in similar terms: he is however cited as good authority of Dionysius.

Charon of Lampsacus composed a history of Persia, from which, as well as from the writings of Hecataeus, Herodotus has been said, but on no very substantial evidence, to have

derived a part of his materials. A few fragments only of these early historians have been preserved in the works of Josephus, Eusebius, Suidas, &c. The new and more agreeable style of writing history introduced by Herodotus and his contemporaries, presently threw the compilations of their predecessors into comparative oblivion. They did not however disappear from the great libraries of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Rome: but when those magnificent collections were broken up, the less popular works utterly perished, for they were not diffused among private collections. Probably the loss sustained by history and general literature is not very important.

Page 12, †.

Commerce is followed by colonization; and both diffuse among a people the love of travel.—The Greeks, in very early times, were known as traders on all the shores of the Mediterranean, and on those of the eastern inland seas. And almost on every shore they had established colonies, long before the time of the Persian war. If the parent state teemed with people beyond its means of supporting them—or if certain individuals became formidable to the state, the Pythian, or some other oracular personage, intimated the will of the god that such and such a person should lead a colony to such or such a spot. Nothing but miseries hung over the head of him who was reluctant to obey the mandate:—but obeying it, he became in due course of years—a chief—a tyrant—a local god. In this way cities—some of which were distinguished as the seats of learning and refinement were founded by the Greeks, not only in the neighbouring islands and Asiatic continent; but on the shores of the Euxine, in Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, Gaul, Spain, and Africa. Foreign travel was therefore facilitated to the Greeks; while their national activity and intelligence would, of course, render many of them prompt to avail themselves of the ready means of seeing

distant countries. We find, in fact, that most Grecian sages spent some years abroad—in Egypt, in Italy, or in Asia. If other means were wanting, these learned travellers engaged in commerce, so far at least as was requisite to the attainment of their principal object.

Herodotus did no more, therefore, than what was customary among literary men, when, to collect materials for his history, he set out on his extensive travels. Even if he did not assert as much, no one could well doubt his having actually seen the greater part of what he describes. But in several instances he explicitly affirms that he spoke from personal knowledge of the facts he records:—for example:—when about to describe the manners of the Persians, he says, *Περσας δὲ οἶδα νομοῖσι τοῖσδε χρεωμένους*—"The Persians, I know, observe the following usages"—Clio, 131: and soon afterwards—140, speaking of the mode of sepulture—"the Magi, I know certainly, expose their dead to be torn of birds; for they do it openly." Our author's highly interesting description of Babylon and the surrounding country evinces clearly that he had visited that city; and when he describes the temple of Belus, 183, he says, "within the same sacred precincts there was lately a statue twelve cubits high, of massive gold:—I did not myself see it, but report only *what the Chaldeans told me*." The fertility of the plain of Babylon he affirms to be incredibly great—"Millet and Indian corn attain a size which, though I know the fact perfectly well, I am unwilling to mention; being aware that, to persons who have never visited the Babylonian territory, what I have already stated relative to its produce will seem incredible." Again: 194;—"The city itself excepted, nothing, of all the things I saw, more excited my surprise than the vessels used on the Euphrates." A conclusive proof of the historian's diligence in collecting information from the most authentic sources is afforded by the account he gives of the Caspian sea—203, corresponding with its actual position and dimensions, as ascertained by modern geography; though

several later writers were totally misinformed on the subject. It was not likely to be any where except on the shores of the Caspian, that this true knowledge of its form could be obtained.

In his second book, which contains the description of Egypt, the assertions of his personal knowledge of what he mentions are frequent and explicit. "Other things I heard when conversing with the priests of Vulcan at Memphis; and wishing to know whether what they told me would agree with other accounts, I went, both to Thebes and Heliopolis." Again; 29;—"The country as far as Elephantine, I have myself inspected:—of that beyond this city, I speak on the report of others." Of his assiduity in collecting authentic information the following instance may be given;—Euterpe 44, "wishing, by all possible means, to gain more certain information on this head (the history of Hercules) I sailed (from Egypt) to Tyre in Phœnicia, having learned that there was there a temple of Hercules held in peculiar veneration. This temple I saw: among the many rich gifts with which it is adorned, there are two columns, the one of pure gold, the other formed of a smaragdus, which was luminous by night. While conversing with the priests of the god, I enquired of them how long a time the temple had stood;—and I found that they did not agree with the Greeks; for they affirmed that the temple was as ancient as the city itself; and that Tyre was founded 2300 years ago. I saw also at Tyre another temple of Hercules, named the Thasian: I went thence to Thasus (an island of the Ægean Sea) where I found a temple built by the Phœnicians," &c. He professes to have seen the pillars erected by Sesostris, in commemoration of his victories in the Syrian Palestine—Euterpe 106; and in Asia Minor, and intimates his having visited Colchis, 104. Our author's description of Scythia and of its wandering hordes (Melpomene) is too exact and characteristic to leave a doubt of his writing from personal observation: the same may be said of his account of the nations of northern Africa, as far as the western

coast. His knowledge of Europe was evidently very limited; nor indeed does he profess to know any thing certainly of the countries north of Macedonia and Thrace.

Few modern travellers in the east fail to give testimony to the authenticity of the geographical portions of this work. It may be proper here to present the reader with the testimony of Major Rennell on this subject, whose work on the geographical system of Herodotus, takes a high place in questions of ancient geography.

“It is a common and just remark that the authority of our author’s work has been rising in the opinion of the world in latter times; which may be referred to the number of discoveries that have been lately made, and which are continually making in the countries which he describes. It was ignorance and inattention therefore that determined the opinion of his judges;—a charge in which several of the ancients are implicated, as well as the moderns. The same want of attention has confounded together the descriptions of what he *saw*, with what he had only *heard*; and which he might think himself bound to relate. Mr. Wood speaks much to the same purpose respecting this matter. He says, ‘were I to give my opinion of him, having followed him through most of the countries which he visited, I would say, that he is a writer of great veracity in his description of what he *saw*; but of credulity in his relations of what he had *heard*.’”—Prelim. Obs. “As a geographer he had an advantage over the generality of his brethren, in that he had *seen* the countries which he most particularly describes; that is, Egypt, Scythia, Thrace, Persia, Assyria, Lydia, Palestine, Syria, &c. That he visited these we learn from his own authority in different parts of his work.” Sect. 1. “It may be remarked that, if his native city, Halicarnassus, be taken for a centre, it will be found that a radius of 1000 British miles will circumscribe the whole extent of his geographical knowledge in detail. It may also be remarked that the circle so described passes through or near to the several points of Babylon, Syene, Carthage, Corsica, the upper

part of the Danube, the forks of the Borysthenes, and the mouth of the Tanais. So that it included Greece, Italy, Thrace, Scythia, Colchis, Asia Minor, Assyria, Palestine, Egypt, Libya, and the country of the Garamantes. It will be found almost invariably that, beyond this range, our author grows more and more obscure and uncertain, as we advance in any line of direction whatsoever: or, if any thing, he grows more obscure on the European, than on the Asiatic side." Sect. 16.

To traverse a surface 6000 miles in circumference, and to bestow a careful attention upon all the principal countries within that range, is an achievement that would not be condemned, even in our own times, when facilities of movement are so much greater than in the age of Herodotus. And a writer, whose ardour in the pursuit of knowledge carried him through so many toils and dangers, is surely entitled to a high degree of general confidence. For other opinions on this subject the reader may consult Mitford's Greece. Chap. vi. and Gillies' Greece, Chap. xxiv.

"Of many indeed of the fables of Herodotus, *as ignorance, conceited of its knowledge*, long affected to call them, subsequent experience has proved the reality; modern discoveries and voyages seem purposely directed to vindicate the fame of a writer, whom Cicero dignifies with the appellation of Prince of Historians."

Page 18, *

The most valuable, or the most known of the existing manuscripts of Herodotus are the following—described by Wesseling, Schweighæusen, Larcher, &c. One of the purest extant is preserved in the French King's Library, and is marked in the Catalogue MDCXXXIII. Tom. II. "A parchment in folio, purchased 1688, containing the nine books

of Herodotus. This codex is by far the best of all, and appears to have been executed in the 12th century." It is distinguished by its uniform retention of the forms of the Ionic dialect—an indication of the antiquity and purity of the copy from which it was derived. The same library contains also several other MSS. of our author, which are thus described.—No. MDCXXXIV. "A codex on paper, formerly belonging to the Colbertine library, containing the nine books of Herodotus: in the margin are notes of some value. This MS. was executed in 1372."—No. MDCXXXV. "A copy on paper, written in the year 1447. The negligence of the copyist is, in this instance, much to be complained of, for sometimes entire phrases are wanting. Yet it contains some readings that deserve attention." No. MMCMXXXIII. On paper; dated 1474. Besides the nine books of Herodotus, this codex contains parts of the works of Isocrates, and Plutarch, together with a lexicon of words peculiar to Herodotus. No. MCDV. Along with extracts from several Greek authors, contains part of the first book of Herodotus, as far as c. 87. Although this codex is of late date, the extract from Clio appears to have been made from a very ancient copy. Some other codices in the same library afford also parts of our author's work.

A codex formerly in the Florentine library, which from the condition of the parchment, and the antique style of the writing, is manifestly of great antiquity. Montfaucon assigns it to the 10th century. "This codex belongs to the same family as that of Askew, and the Medicean. Yet neither was it copied from the latter, with which, indeed, it might dispute the palm of excellence; but being derived from a more ancient source, it offers many approved readings, differing from the Medicean, where that is in fault, or where it offers no emendation of the common text. This Medicean codex is thus described in the Catalogue of the Florentine library. "Herodotus:—a very ancient codex, valuable beyond all praise. It is on paper, in quarto, well preserved:—executed

in the tenth century. The titles of the books are in uncial letters of gold: it contains 374 pages." This copy was followed with a too superstitious reverence by Gronovius: being compelled to consult it in the public library, and under the eye of the librarian, he has not seldom mistaken its readings. A MS. of Herodotus, formerly in the library of Archbishop Sancroft, and afterward in that of Emanuel College, Cambridge, has been deemed of high antiquity, and great value. The libraries of Oxford contain also some codices of our author, and several are known in the possession of private persons. "These manuscript copies," says Wesseling, "brought to light from various places, have not, it is manifest, originated all from one source (in modern times). Where the copy followed by Valla is torn or defective, there also the Vienna, the Vatican, and the Oxford MSS. are wanting. And in what these are remarkable, so is the Florentine. But the Medicean MS. that of Cardinal Passio, and of Askew, for the most part agree. The three first mentioned, seem to have been derived all from some one more ancient parchment. The writer of which, offended perhaps at the frequent digressions of the first book, very daringly cut them all off; and lest the hiatus should seem harsh, he skilfully fitted the parts, so as to preserve the continuity of the style. The three last, on the contrary, were derived from the copy of a transcriber better informed, who scrupled to make any needless alterations. A great number of the various readings which distinguish these MSS. are attributable to the copyists who have substituted the common forms of the language, and words better known, in the place of the Ionic forms and of obsolete words."

All that is of any importance in proof of the genuineness and integrity of ancient books is to know that there are in existence *several* copies, evidently of older date than the first printed edition of the author; and that these copies, by their general agreement, and by their smaller diversities, prove, at once, their derivation from the same original, and their long

distance from that original; since many of these diversities are such as could have arisen only from many successive transcriptions. Beyond this simple fact, the knowledge of codices, and of various readings, is interesting to none but editors and critics.

Page 18, †.

Of Valla's translation Wesseling speaks as follows:—
“The translation of the learned Laurentius Valla, appeared at Venice in the year 1474. This version, though incorrectly printed, and abounding with the translator's errors, is not to be altogether contemned. As corrected by H. Stephens, and others, it is preserved to the present day. To what extent it has been criticised by Huëtius and others is well known. Yet Laurentius should not bear more than his share of blame. The difficulty of the task which he first attempted must be considered; and many of his errors are to be attributed to the parchments he followed, which, though good, were miserably defective in the first book.” Several entire sections are enumerated which are not to be found in this version, and many which want some sentences. “Laurentius Valla was indeed an accomplished master of the Latin language; but not deeply imbued with Greek learning; for the acquirement of which the learned men of that age wanted many facilities which we possess in abundance. From this cause, as well as because the copy of Herodotus he made use of was extremely corrupt, there are in his version of this author an incredible number of places in which, either the meaning of the original is entirely mistaken, or so much ambiguity and obscurity hangs over the sense, that it is hard to guess what the Grecian, or what his interpreter intended to say. Besides, it seems that he was far from bestowing all the pains in his power upon the construction of his version; but that he completed his task in the shortest possible time. Gronovius indeed corrected,

here and there, many of Valla's errors; but a far greater number he left untouched. Wesseling's corrections are very few; for that learned man, intent on more important objects, purposely neglected the Latin version. So it has happened that hardly any Greek author has been so miserably rendered into Latin as Herodotus." Schweighæuser. Præf. Larcher cites a number of instances of Valla's palpable errors.—Particulars of this kind cannot be interesting to the general reader.

Page 21, *.

"The forms and proprieties of the Ionic dialect I have restored, wherever they could be gathered clearly *from the ancient codices*, and have replaced some readings which, without cause, had been rejected. Innumerable passages I have relieved from errors, yet *very rarely on mere conjecture*, and only in those words which the genius of the language would not admit; and in many instances have thought it enough just to point out the means of amending the text, where it is evidently corrupted." In quoting this passage from Wesseling, Schweighæuser says, "Neither have we, except in a very few places, admitted conjectural emendations into the text; and these only where it was evident that all the readings of all the existing copies were corrupted; and where an emendation presented itself which, not merely seemed probable, but which was so clear and certain as to need no argument in its favour." Very judiciously, this editor refuses to impute to the temerity or ignorance of copyists *all* the variations from the Ionic forms; since it is evident that Greek writers who adopted *one* of the dialects, allowed themselves the liberty of occasionally using the common forms of the language: he therefore restores the ionicisms only when he has the authority of MSS for so doing. Of Wesseling's extreme caution, Schweighæuser thus expresses his opinion.—"In this edition, excepting a few errors, easily corrected, or some cases which may be open to

disputation, the learned have nothing to complain of; unless it be, that, in adopting better readings, warranted by MSS as well as in correcting, on probable conjecture, some places manifestly faulty in all copies, the Editor was too timid.—So much so indeed, that many approved readings which he might well have admitted into the text, he ventured not to adopt. And often he preferred to leave, untouched, manifest and gross corruptions, rather than to put in their place his own emendations, or those of others, though decidedly approved by himself.—As to conjectural emendations—even in those places where all the MSS are plainly in fault, we have seen him, in his preface, ingenuously confess that he had rather be thought too cautious, than too bold:—and who would not esteem—yes and admire, rather than condemn, this illustrious man, blaming his own timidity in this sort:—‘In attempting to restore the language of Herodotus, I have been restrained often by more than a due timidity; but such is my nature.’” This editor, in his preface, states that, having been applied to, to superintend a reprint of Wesseling’s Herodotus, he had declined doing so, unless he should be able to obtain, from the French king’s library, the loan of the MSS of Herodotus, there preserved:—the troubles of the times preventing this, he sought for some one, residing at Paris, who would freely undertake the irksome and painful toil of collating Wesseling’s text with all those codices; and at length, by means of a learned friend, he met with a young man, a native of Greece, who executed the task of comparing the text—word by word—with the five principal manuscripts in the library, and making a *separate* list of the various readings in each.

From the mass of variations brought before him, the office of the editor is to select that one which most recommends itself, either by the superior authority of the codex in which it appears, or by its particular probability, or seeming accordance with the author’s style or meaning, or with the proprieties of the language. And not seldom it happens that the most inferior copies have chanced to preserve an evidently

genuine reading, where the best have, as plainly, erred—"No MSS.," an eminent critic has said, "ought to be thought unworthy of being consulted." Yet in cases of importance, where there may be room for doubt among the existing variations, the canon must be obeyed which enjoins that, "Codices should rather be *weighed* than numbered." Although individual discussions on subjects of this kind cannot but seem uninteresting, and even trivial to general readers—and perhaps absurd, when the gravity and strenuousness with which, sometimes, the most minute points are argued, is observed; yet it ought never to be forgotten that *the credit, purity, and consistency* of ancient literature, are very greatly promoted by the indefatigable zeal of those who devote their lives to these learned labours

Pa e 21, †.

The late edition of Herodotus, by Prof. Gaisford, ought to have been enumerated in the text. Our author has several times been translated into most of the languages of modern Europe. An English translation of the first two books appeared in 1584, which is amusingly quaint. Littlebury's was published in 1737, and has been frequently reprinted. But a more popular, though less exact translation, was made by Beloe 1791, of which several editions have been circulated. Every reader who is familiar with the French language will choose to read Herodotus in the excellent translation of Larcher, which is accompanied with copious, learned, and, for the most part, judicious Notes. But who that has taste and a common measure of learning, would not rather procure for himself the delight of conversing with this agreeable writer in his own sweet Ionic? In the course of such a reading a familiarity with the most noble of all languages may be acquired, almost without conscious labour.

Additional Note to page 25, *.

The intention of the quotations contained in this, and the following chapter, is merely to exemplify a branch of the process of historical proof; and this intention would not be deranged by incidental inaccuracies of reference. Yet I have bestowed some pains to render these citations correct. It would have been extremely easy to have gathered five times the number from the authors cited; and to have cited many other authors; but no valuable purpose would have been accomplished by so doing. Almost all the quotations given or referred to, are such as prove the writer's actual acquaintance with the work he mentions.

Page 38, *.

“The best writers have, in every age, been exposed to very inequitable criticisms.—Homer had his Zoilus; Herodotus, the follower of Homer; and the father of History, as Homer is of Poetry, has not been much better treated by many succeeding writers. The criticisms of Zoilus have not come down to us; they were, as it seems, so unjust, and so perverse, that they were not deemed worthy of being transmitted to posterity. But the disparaging judgments which several authors have given against Herodotus, are still extant. Many of these writers have spoken of him as an agreeable narrator of tales, to whom falsehoods and fictions were cheap, when he thought they would amuse his readers: and they have accused him of sacrificing truth to the desire to please by the attractions of style, or by the marvellous in his narrative. Plutarch, more angry than any other of these critics, not content to charge Herodotus with swelling his history by the admission of fables and falsehoods, has reproached him with misrepre-

setting facts from pure malignity, and with having
 his business to tarnish the glory of Greece in general, and
 each state by inventions and calumnies. It is
 surprising that a writer so distinguished by taste and
 sense as was Plutarch, should have published a treatise
 with invectives and harsh criticisms against an author
 he ought naturally to have esteemed:—the good quality
 common to him and Herodotus might, one would think, have
 engaged him to use only the language of eulogy. What
 were the reasons which impelled him to give loose to so much
 angry feeling? He himself informs us, at the commencement
 of his book:—he says, he has not been able to observe with-
 out indignation the strokes of malignity aimed by Herodotus
 at the Greeks in general, and at the Bœotians and Corinthians
 in particular:—zeal for the glory of the Bœotians, and love
 for truth, have, he says, equally engaged him to undertake
 their defence. Plutarch was a Bœotian; and in this char-
 acter thought himself obliged to avenge his ancestors, whom
 Herodotus had not spared in his narrative of the invasion of
 Greece by the Persians. In truth, the historian relates that
 the Bœotians, not content with having betrayed the common
 cause of Greece, and with submitting themselves to Xerxes,
 fought at the battle of Platæa against the Greeks, with as
 much animosity as the Persians themselves. This fact was so
 well known, that Plutarch dared not attempt a direct apology
 for the conduct of the Bœotians; but wishing, at any rate, to
 satisfy his resentment against Herodotus, and to bring his
 account of the defection of the Thebans and Bœotians under
 suspicion, he has entered upon a general criticism of the
 history, in doing which he strives, by all means, to prove that
 the historian is unworthy of confidence—that he has perverted
 history from pure malignity, and that his evil intention ap-
 pears, not only in the atrocities with which he has charged the
 Bœotians, but in the unworthy manner with which he has
 treated the other Greeks.” *Defence d’ Herodote contre les
 accusations de Plutarque; par M. L’Abbé Geinoz. Reprinted*

by Larcher, tome vi. pp. 515, 519. "It has been a kind of fashion, to which Plutarch principally has given vogue to sneer at the authority of Herodotus. An attentive examination of his narrative (relative to the Scythians) and a careful comparison of it with all the ancient writers, nearest to him in age, convinced me of its merit. His place in ancient history can be supplied by no other ancient author." Mitford's *Hist. of Greece*, v. ii. p. 39. "The reproaches which Juvenal and Plutarch, in his treatise entitled the *Malignity of Herodotus*—make to this great historian, are fully answered by Aldus Minutius, Camerarius, and Stephanus. Plutarch, forsooth, was offended that his countrymen made so bad a figure in the history of Herodotus. The criticism of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a writer of more taste and discernment than Plutarch, does ample justice to the father of history. Gillies' *Hist. of Ancient Greece*. Chap. xxiv.

Page 39, *.

The general reader would not be interested by a comparison of passages.—Plutarch, sometimes in his own words, and sometimes by verbal quotations, brings forward a considerable portion of the entire history; thus giving one of the most complete instances of extensive quotation that is met with in ancient literature. Controversies, more than any other species of composition, have served the important purpose of attesting the genuineness and integrity of ancient writings. —An author who is solicitous to establish a particular point, naturally looks around on all sides for concurrent opinions, and quotes whatever occurs to his memory, tending to give support to his position. The two books of Josephus against Apion are remarkable instances of this sort; and contain many important passages from writers whose works have since perished. The numerous and eager controversies that have, from the earliest times, taken place among Christians, have

furnished the most ample and conclusive proofs of the safe transmission of the Holy Scriptures from age to age. No period, from the time of Clement of Rome, to that of Wickliffe, was destitute of some warm discussion among divines, in which a large portion of the Old and New Testaments has been quoted on both sides. This is much more than can be said of any other body of literature.

Page 46, *.

“The duty of an historian,” says Lucian (quoted by Larcher, t. vi. p. 253) “is to recount facts as they actually happened: but he cannot do this if he is in fear of Artaxerxes, whose physician he is; or if he entertains the hope of receiving from the Persians the purple robe—a gold chain, and a Nisæan horse, as the reward of the eulogies he bestows on the prince.” This was precisely the situation of Ctesias during his residence of seventeen years at the Persian court, where, as it is affirmed, he composed his history. His evidence therefore, so far as he contradicts Herodotus, is open to the strongest possible suspicion; for to impugn the credit of that writer was his principal intention. His variations from Herodotus are chiefly on those points of Persian history with which none of the Greeks were well acquainted, and relative to which we must suspend our opinion of the narrative given by Herodotus, though there is no reason to think he did not use diligence in collecting information, and some discretion in selecting his materials. In the quotation from Ctesias—as quoted by Photius—given at pages 77—80, the reader will see that though there are variations in the details, all the main events of the Persian invasion are admitted. His errors on lesser points are easily exposed. Some writers, as Diodorus, Eusebius, and Chrysostom, have, with little judgment, affected to prefer Ctesias to Herodotus. I know not that any modern writer has taken the same side.

Page 61, *.

When discussing the subject of the twenty Satrapies of Darius, Major Rennell avails himself of the information contained in our author's description of the army of Xerxes, to which his laborious enquiries incline him to attribute a high degree of authority. Now it is evident that, unless Herodotus had possessed authentic and accurate documents, it would have been utterly impossible for him to have given the consistency of truth to two distinct accounts of nations and of people, so various and so remote from Greece. "Although there are some errors in the description, as there must necessarily be where the subject is so very extensive, yet it is on the whole so remarkably consistent, that one is surprised how the Greeks found means to acquire so much knowledge respecting so distant a part. It is possible that we have been in the habit of doing them an injustice, by allowing them a less degree of knowledge of the geography of Asia, down to the expedition of Alexander, than they really possessed: that is, we have, in some instances, ascribed to Alexander, certain geographical discoveries which perhaps were made long anterior to his expedition." Sect. XI. "We shall close the account of the Satrapies, and our remarks on the armament of Xerxes, with some additional ones on the general truth of the statement of the latter, and on the final object of the expedition. Brief as the descriptions in the text are, they contain a great variety of information, and furnish a number of proofs of the general truth of our author's history; for the descriptions of the dress and weapons of several of the remote nations, engaged in the expedition of Xerxes, *agree with what appears amongst them at this day*; which is a strong confirmation of it; notwithstanding that some attempts have been made to ridicule it by different writers. Herodotus had *conversed* with those who had *seen* the dress and weapons of these tribes during the invasion; and therefore we cannot doubt

that the Indians clothed in *cotton*, and with bows made of *reeds*, (i. e. bamboos) were amongst them. Of course, that the Great King had summoned his vassals and allies, generally, to this European war: a war intended not merely against *Greece*, but against *EUROPE* in general, as appears by the speeches of Xerxes, and other circumstances. The evident cause of the assemblage of so many nations was that the Europeans (as at the present day) were deemed so far superior to Asiatics as to require a *vastly* greater number of the latter to oppose them. This is no less apparent in the history of the wars of Alexander, and of the wars made by Europeans in the East in modern times. However we do not by any means believe in the *numbers* described by the Greek historians; because we cannot comprehend, from what is seen and known, how such a multitude could be provided with food, and their beasts with forage. But that the army of Xerxes was *great beyond all example*, may be readily believed, because it was collected from a vastly extended empire, every part of which, as well as its allies, furnished a proportion: and if the aggregate had amounted to a *moderate* number only, it would have been nugatory to levy *that* number throughout the whole empire; and to collect troops from India and Ethiopia to attack Greece, when the whole number required might have been collected in Lower Asia.

“ In the history of the Persian invasion, and its termination, so glorious for Greece, Herodotus has given a lesson to all free states that do exist, or that may hereafter exist in the world; that is, to dispute their independency, let the numbers of the enemy be what they may. He has shown that the Greeks, although a large proportion of their country was in the hands of the enemy, were still formidable, and in the end prevailed over a foe that outnumbered them more than three to one in the decisive battle of *Platæa*; notwithstanding there were included in that vast majority as many of their renegade countrymen as amounted to nearly half their own numbers. It is true that the invaders were *Persians*, and the defenders

Greeks; but the event of the contest depended chiefly on the obstinate determination of the Greeks not to submit :—a resolution which, accompanied by wisdom and discipline, must ever prevail.” Sect. XII. The patriotic Major then applies the example of Greece with great force to the then existing contest between England and revolutionary France :—his anticipations have been more than realized : the home of liberty is saved—the proud have fallen.

It seems quite impracticable, from the existing evidence, to ascertain how great a deduction ought to be made from the calculations of Herodotus; but it is easy to believe that his authorities, which unquestionably were authentic in what relates to the description of the forces, might lead him astray, without any signal fault on his part.—Or probably, as the numbers exceeded the facilities of common computation, some conjectural mode of calculation was adopted by the contemporary Greeks, which might easily exceed the truth.—For example; the length of time occupied by the barbarian train in passing certain defiles :—or the very fallacious mode of reckoning employed by the Persians was perhaps followed :—this, as Herodotus describes it, consisted in computing ten thousand men, who were packed in a circle as closely as possible, and a fence formed round them : they were then removed, and the entire army, in turns, was made to pass within the enclosure : the whole was thus counted into ten thousands. But how probable is it, that by the inattention of the persons who conducted this process, the successive *packages* were less and less dense.—Seven thousand men might easily *seem* to fill the space in which ten had been at first crammed. Nor is it at all safe to argue *à priori* on the supposition that so many *could not* have been supported on the march. The power which drew a large levy of men from twenty-nine nations, might also drain those nations of their grain. A vast fleet of flat-bottomed barges attended the army along the coast : as soon as this fleet was separated from it, all the extremities of famine were suffered by the retreating host. This armament

is not fairly compared with those which, in later times, have traversed the *continent* of Asia : for in these instances the aid of an *attendant fleet* was not available. *Without* this aid the *distant* movement of 500,000 men is scarcely practicable ; *with* it, three or four times that number might with little difficulty be led a distance of three or six months' march. This important difference has not been duly regarded by those who have discussed the question. If then such a deduction from the army of Xerxes is made as may readily be accounted for from the inaccurate mode of computation employed by the Persians or the Greeks ; and if the attendance of so large a fleet of store ships is considered, we may well hold Herodotus excused from the charge, either of deliberate falsification, or of intended exaggeration.

Page 94, *.

Of all interminable discussions, those on questions of ancient chronology are the most so. It would be an exaggeration to affirm that they are also utterly unsatisfactory. But certainly a reader who has not made himself a party in these inquiries, must be amazed to observe on what hollow ground very able and learned men have raised huge systems for adjusting the facts of ancient history. The *truth* of such facts is scarcely ever involved in difficulties of this kind :—some of the best attested events are placed by different chronologists at very different points of time. These uncertainties are therefore altogether foreign to the intention of this volume. It may just be mentioned that the eclipse of the sun mentioned in the text, has been the subject of much learned inquiry ; for could it be determined satisfactorily what eclipse is here referred to, an important point would be gained, from whence to measure other events. But difficulties attend every supposition that has been defended.

Page 97, †.

“ When the Lydians arrived and delivered their message, the Pythian is said to have replied ;—That even the god could not avert the decree of fate. That Cræsus, the fifth in descent, suffered for the sin of his progenitor, who being a servant of the Heraclidæ, consented to the guile of the woman, and slew his master; taking possession, without right, of his place and honour. That yet Apollo *had endeavoured* to defer the fall of Sardis till the next generation; but that *he had not been able to move the fates*, who would no further yield to his solicitation than, as a special favour to Cræsus, to place the taking of Sardis three years later than otherwise it would have happened. Let Cræsus therefore know that he is a captive three years later than the fates had decreed; and then remember that he rescued him when about to be burned. As to the response, Cræsus had no right to complain; for Apollo had foretold that if he invaded the Persians, he would overthrow a great empire; and if upon this he had wished to be better informed, he should have inquired again, whether his own empire, or that of Cyrus was intended. Wherefore, as he had neither understood the oracle, nor asked for its meaning, he might take the blame to himself.” Clio. c. 91. This is very much in the lame style of a humble agent, who finding that he has led an employer into ruin, wishes so to excuse his want of skill or of fidelity, as may save his credit with other customers. If the friendly zeal of the god really induced him to make this humble suit to the fates, why not apprise his client of the unsuccessful negociation? These “immortals,” as they showed themselves mere mortals by their vices, so did they appear also by the cringing policy of their intercourse with men. An instance of a similar kind will be given in a following Note.

Page 100, *.

Some writers—Africanus, Josephus, Eusebius, Usher, Prideaux, Hales—finding it more easy to adjust their systems of Asiatic history to the *Cyropædia* than to the narrative of Herodotus, have given the palm of authenticity to Xenophon; and as a reason for this preference they have alleged that this writer's journey into the east, with the expedition under the younger Cyrus, gave him the opportunity of collecting authentic materials relating to the history of the hero of the *Cyropædia*. As if an officer of the army which invaded Russia under Napoleon, and which commenced a precipitate retreat before it reached the capital, would, of course, have become thereby qualified to write the history of Peter the Great! The narrative of the *Anabasis* *excludes* the idea that the author enjoyed any opportunity whatever of consulting Persian records; even had he been competent to avail himself of such advantages. Besides;—the *Cyropædia* carries the air of fiction on every page. "The highest panegyric of this work is that many learned men have mistaken it for a true history." Gillies. Richardson is certainly right in his observations on the *Cyropædia*—Dissertation, p. 397.

Page 102, *.

After the taking of Sardis by Cyrus, the treasures of Cræsus had been committed by the conqueror to the care of Pactyas, a Lydian. This man, more faithful to his country than to his new master, excited the people to throw off the Persian yoke; but hearing that a force was hastening to attack him, he fled, and took refuge at Cyme. When the Persian general had quelled the revolt, he sent to demand Pactyas of the Cymeans: but, says Herodotus, "the Cymeans resolved to ask the advice of the god upon the subject, at the Branchidian oracle:—a very ancient oracle always consulted by the Ionians and Æolians: the temple is situated in the Milesian territory, above the

port of Panormus. Sending therefore their messengers, they inquired 'Concerning Pactyas, what would be most agreeable to the gods for them to do?' The oracle replied—'To deliver Pactyas to the Persians.' Hearing this they prepared to deliver him; but when the people at large were resolved to do so, Aristodicus, son of Heraclides, a man in high repute among the citizens, forbade them to act in this manner, as he did not confide in the oracle; or believed that the messengers had not reported it truly. They therefore sent other persons, of whom Aristodicus was one, to consult the oracle a second time. When they arrived at Branchidæ, Aristodicus himself put the question in these words—'O king! Pactyas, a Lydian, came to us, a suppliant, fleeing from the death threatened him by the Persians, who now demand him of the Cymeans; but we, though fearing the Persian power, dare not surrender him, until we have been certainly informed by you that we ought to do so.' To this inquiry the same answer as before was returned—'that Pactyas should be delivered to the Persians.' Upon this Aristodicus, having before determined what to do, walking round the temple, disturbed the sparrows and other birds that built their nests about the edifice. While thus employed, it is said, that a voice proceeded from the recess, directed towards Aristodicus—uttering these words—'Most impious of men! What is it that thou darest to attempt? Dost thou drive away from the temple those whom I protect?' To which, it is added, Aristodicus, without hesitation replied—'O king! you protect your suppliants, and command the Cymæans to deliver up their's!'—'Yes,' replied the voice, 'I command it, that those who so impiously approached the oracle may quickly perish, and no more draw near to ask if a suppliant may be surrendered.'" Clio, c. 159. By this paltry turn the credit of the oracle was seemingly saved.

Persian kings and heroes, displays an imagination and smoothness of numbers hardly inferior to Homer." p. 29.—" But the invasions of Jengis Khan and Tamerlane in the beginning of the 13th, and end of the 14th centuries, gave violent checks to all the arts of peace. The Khalifat and all its feudatory princes were overwhelmed, and although Tamerlane, in a variety of instances, was a liberal patron of learned men, that was but a feeble compensation for the general desolation which he spread around; and the destruction of a number of magnificent patrons of the arts, who sunk under the torrent of his irresistible power. The Turks soon after stretched their government—unfavourable to liberty and science, from Europe to the banks of the Tigris; whilst in Persia, the bloody reigns of the detested house of Sefi, concurred effectually in plunging those noble countries into that melancholy barbarism from which Europe, during that period, had been gradually emerging. For near three hundred years the literary fire of the Persians and Arabians seems indeed to have been almost extinguished, nothing, hardly, during that time which deserves attention, being known, at least in Europe." pp. 33, 34.

These statements are more than enough to prove the extreme futility of attempting to destroy the credit of Greek literature, upon the pretext that it is *not confirmed* by existing Persian literature. " Whence the historians of the East had their materials *it is difficult to determine*; but even the rudest of people, where they contradict not probability, are entitled to respect in the annals of their own country: in a few circumstances they coincide with the writers of Greece and Rome; this strengthens history; there are many upon which they are silent; this naturally leads to doubt and enquiry; there are numbers in which the opposition is pointed: whom are we to believe? the natives, or the native enemies of a country? those who might have had access to genuine records, or those who probably never could? It may undoubtedly be objected to the principal historians of Persia, now known in

Europe, that *they are all subsequent to the Mohammedan era*—that Persian literature was almost entirely annihilated in the consequences of the Arabian conquest;—that the Grecians wrote nearer to the events which they have recorded, and therefore, though foreigners, have a superior claim to our credence than *the natives of after ages*, who must have compiled their annals under many circumstances of discouraging obscurity. These considerations are undoubtedly of weight, and in all relations where consistency is not hurt, we should certainly allow them every degree of force. It is error alone we should wish to reprobate :—it is the path of truth we should wish to clear.” pp. 41, 42.

The reader may now judge with how much appearance of reason the authority of the Persian historians, who lived *sixteen hundred years* after the events in question, and after three universal devastations had passed over the literature of the east, is made to bring into doubt the narratives of the Greek historians, who describe the invasion of *their own country, in their own times!* Yet on this ground this writer thinks the history of the Persian invasion at best very questionable. He thus opposes the one body of evidence to the other—“ We have therefore the history of the Persians, as given us by the Greeks; and the history of the Persians as written by themselves. Between those classes of writers we might naturally expect some difference of facts; but we should as naturally look for a few great lines which might mark some similarity of story; yet, from every research which I have had an opportunity to make, there seems to be nearly as much resemblance between the annals of England and Japan, as between the European and Asiatic relations of the same empire. The names and numbers of their kings have no analogy; and in regard to the most splendid facts of the Greek historians, the Persians are entirely silent. We have no mention of the great Cyrus; nor of any king of Persia who, in the events of his reign, can apparently be forced into a similitude. We have no Cræsus king of Lydia; not

a syllable of Cambyzes, or of his frantic expedition against the Ethiopians. Smerdis Magus, and the succession of Darius the son of Hystaspes, by the neighing of his horse, are, to the Persians, circumstances equally unknown as the numerous assassinations recorded by the Greeks. Not a vestige is at the same time to be discovered of the famous battles of Marathon, Thermopylæ, Salamis, Platæa, or Mycale, nor of that prodigious force which Xerxes led out of the Persian empire to overwhelm the states of Greece." pp. 51, 52.

And how should the Persian romancers of the 12th century know any thing of the invasion of Greece by Xerxes? Unless indeed, like the Saracens, they had obtained translations of the Greek authors. If there had indeed been a coincidence between the Persian and the Greek historians, we must have attributed the agreement to some such *borrowing* on the part of the former.

"Those famous invasions may possibly, therefore, have been simply the movements of the governors of Asia Minor, to enforce a tribute which the Persians might often claim, and the Greeks might never pay. Marathon, Salamis, and other celebrated battles *may* indeed have been real events, but—'numerous as the sands on the shore,' is an idea which, in all times, has been annexed to defeated armies: and the Grecian writers, to dignify their country, may have turned the hyperbole into historic fact; and swelled the *thousands* of the *Persian satrap*, into the *millions* of the *Persian king*. Some of these famed events *it is not impossible* too, might have been the mere descents of pirates, or of private adventurers, either with a view to plunder, or to retaliate some similar expedition of the Greeks." p. 54. The author goes on to argue upon the *improbabilities* contained in the narrative of the Greek historians, which he thinks are so great as to deprive them of almost all claim to respect. But the very same things which seem utterly incredible to one man, appear not at all so to another, equally learned and intelligent. For

instance ; the principal circumstances of the Persian invasion are, to Richardson, “ absolutely incredible.” But Mitford, Gillies, Rennell, confide in the Greek historians, without hesitation. In the same way, many of the descriptions of remote countries given by Herodotus, were, during many centuries, considered by critics as utterly “ incredible,” and the historian was accordingly spoken of as “ a pleasant fabulist.” But modern travellers, who have followed his track, attest the singular accuracy of most of these “ *incredible*” descriptions. Surely the flippancy of scepticism might receive a caution from such instances of corrected ignorance.

Page 118, *.

The theories of Jacob Bryant, and of Sir William Jones, relate to a period far anterior to the earliest times of *authentic* Grecian history. During three-and-twenty centuries the history of the Asiatic and European races has been of a uniform character. Even at the time when the European mind was at its lowest depression, and the Asiatic at its greatest elevation, the former contended with the latter on, at least, equal terms.—The wars of the Holy Land do not, form an exception to the standing course of events. It is remarkable that the Saracens, at the period of their greatest power, made impression upon Europe only on its Asiatic border, and upon its southern extremity.

Page 132, *.

No modern writer of even common learning has attempted to question the genuineness of the Apostolical epistles. It may then be assumed as granted on all sides. The futile discussions that have been raised relative to the 2d epistle of Peter, the epistle of James, and the epistle to the Hebrews,

need not here form an exception to this general assertion; for, in the first place, the historical argument is altogether independent of *those* epistles, and in the second place, the kind of inferences drawn from the epistles would be scarcely affected by a denial of their *canonical authority*. Those of Paul's epistles, the genuineness of which Paley has demonstrated, are abundantly sufficient for the purpose of proving the truth of the facts, and the integrity of the writer.

Page 133, *.

It is said to be the custom at the courts of some African chiefs, not to *hear*, but to *hang* a messenger of bad news. Excellent device for securing a constant tide of good fortune! And a device equally ingenious will secure any man from the hazard of being convinced of the truth of an opinion he dislikes.—Only let him lay it down as his maxim that *no evidence* shall alter his present opinion; and let his friends be acquainted with this determination; and he may then pass *unmolested* through life, though buttoned up in preposterous errors. But surely, when we hear a determination of this kind stoutly announced, we may fairly conclude that some evidence that is felt to be very cogent, draws it forth:—for if the evidence were feeble and inconclusive, why not adopt the natural and easy course of pointing out its insufficiency? What commentator upon Livy, for example, or upon Pausanias, would think it needful to bestow page after page upon an abstract argument to prove that *no evidence*, however strong it might seem to be, ought to make us credit the prodigies related by those authors? It is quite enough that the evidence adduced by them in such instances, is manifestly unworthy of respect. Now when infidel writers—Hume, for example, and especially the modern German divines, with infinite pains endeavour to demonstrate, on abstract principles, that miracles can never have taken place, or that no

evidence, however strong, could avail to attest them, it is natural and fair to conclude that nothing less than the convincing force of the evidence in favour of the Christian miracles has drawn forth so much abstruse and strenuous logic. It has certainly been by an oversight that infidels have given so much prominence to this particular argument.—The extreme solicitude they have displayed to establish their position, has gone very near to an open acknowledgment that nothing else could save them from becoming Christians. For if once it were granted that a miracle might be believed, then those of the New Testament must be admitted.

Page 134, *.

The letter of Pliny to Trajan has been often presented to the English reader. Yet, as it is so particularly referred to in this chapter, there seems a propriety in subjoining a translation.

“ Pliny to Trajan :—Greeting.

“ It is my constant rule, Sire, to refer all affairs to you, on which I am undecided; for who can better direct my incertitude, or inform my ignorance? At the examinations of Christians I have never before been present; I therefore know not on what account, or to what extent it is usual to punish or to question them. Nor have I a little doubted whether any distinction should be made on account of age; or whether the tender should be treated in the same way as the more robust; whether indulgence should be given to repentance, or whether a renunciation of the name should be allowed to avail him who once was indeed a Christian. Or whether the mere profession, apart from crimes, or the crimes inhering with the profession, should be punished. In the mean time the course I have pursued in reference to those who have been brought before me *as Christians*, is this:—I have asked if they were Christians.—

If they confessed, I repeated the inquiry once and again—threatening them with punishment:—if they persisted, I have ordered them to be led to execution. For truly I did not doubt that, whatever might be implied in their profession, their refractory spirit and inflexible stubbornness merited punishment. Others there were, infected with the same folly, who, being Roman citizens, I have noted to be sent to the city (Rome). Presently, as is usual in such cases, while these matters were in hand, and while the indictments were postponed, many representations fell in.—An anonymous paper was offered, containing the names of many persons who denied themselves to be, or to have been Christians; and at my dictation invoked the gods, and made an oblation of frankincense and wine to your statue; which, for this purpose, I had ordered to be placed with the images of the divinities. Moreover they cursed Christ, which it is said none who are Christians indeed can by any means be forced to do.—I therefore thought it proper to dismiss them. Others, named by the informer, at first confessed themselves to be Christians; but presently denied it; or said they had been, but had ceased to be such:—some, more than three years, or a longer time; and a few more than twenty years. All of these worshipped your image, and those of the gods, and cursed Christ. They declared, however, that the utmost extent of their fault or error was this, that they had been wont, on a stated day, to assemble before sun-rise, and to sing a hymn responsively to Christ as to a god.—That they bound themselves mutually by a vow—not for any criminal purpose, but on the contrary to abstain from thefts, robberies, and adulteries, to be faithful to their word, and to restore a pledge, after which it was their custom to disperse: they again met to take a repast—promiscuous indeed, but innocent; from this however they had desisted since the publication of my edict, in which according to your commands, I had prohibited conventicles. Having received these depositions, I deemed it necessary to obtain the truth by putting to the torture two damsels, who were called

deaconesses. But I discovered nothing except a base and immoderate superstition. Wherefore deferring the proceedings, I resolved to consult you.—For the affair seemed to me to demand consultation, especially considering the number of persons who stand in peril. Indeed there are many of every age, of every rank, and of both sexes, who are called in question, or who will be so. Nor has the contagion of this superstition spread through the towns only; but through the villages also, and the open country. Yet may it be resisted and corrected, for it is unquestionable that the temples—lately almost deserted, have begun to be again honoured;—the sacred rites, long neglected, to be fulfilled; and the victims, which hardly found a purchaser, to be sold. Whence it is easy to calculate how great a crowd of persons may be reclaimed if place is granted to repentance.”

“Trajan to Pliny:—Greeting.

“You have acted properly, my Secundus, in deferring the trials of those who were brought before you as Christians. No absolute and universal rule can indeed be laid down for your guidance on these occasions. But no inquisitions are to be made:—if any are brought before you, and convicted, let them be punished. Yet so as that if any one denies himself to be a Christian, and shall prove he is not, by supplicating our gods, his penitence shall avail for his pardon, although he has formerly been suspected. But anonymous informations must in no case be admitted, for they are of the worst consequence, and unsuited to the spirit of the age.”

Pliny's Epistles, Book x. 97 and 98.

Page 135, *.

“But no efforts within the power of man—no bribes from the emperor, no propitiations offered to the gods, availed to dispel the infamy, or destroy the belief that the fire had taken place by his command. Wherefore, in order to quell the

rumour, Nero falsely accused, and with exquisite tortures punished, certain persons—hated for their crimes—who, by the common people, were called *Christians*. The founder of the sect was Christ, put to death during the reign of Tiberius, by the procurator, Pontius Pilate. The pestilent superstition—for a time repressed, broke forth anew, and spread, not only through Judæa, the source of the mischief; but in Rome itself—where things atrocious and scandalous meet from all quarters, and make themselves known. Those who confessed the name, being secured, by their means a vast multitude was convicted—not indeed of having fired the city, but of hating mankind. The dying were made sport of, for some were enclosed in the skins of wild beasts, and torn to death by dogs: others were crucified; others, being set on fire at sunset, burned to illumine the darkness. Nero offered his own gardens for the spectacle; and made sports in the Circus; himself, in the habit of a charioteer, mixing with the mob, or driving his car. Hence, though the sufferers were guilty, and deserving of the severest punishments, pity was excited towards them, seeing that they perished, not for the public good, but to gratify the ferocity of an individual.”

Tacitus.—Annals : Book xv. sect. 44.

Page 138, †.

The seeming contradiction in the phrases here used is removed by attending to the exact meaning of the terms. *Χαρά ανεκλαλητω*—qui verbis *satis* exprimi nequit. This is to be distinguished from the *αλαλητος*: Rom. viii. 26, which, Ex analogia linguæ Græciæ, significat id, quod ore non profertur, non verbis exprimitur, sed *tacetur et occultatur*. Schleusner. The joy *unspeakable*; in this sense, is quite compatible with the exulting expressions of the same feeling. *Δεδοξασμενος*—celebrated—*χαρά δεδοξασμενη*—with a *celebrative* joy.

On the same page, for *tamquam* read *tanquam*.

Page 155, *.

The voice of common sense is too loud and instant in *England* to allow absurdities like those of the German protestant divines to be promulgated from the press. Nor is there any class of men, learned or ignorant in this country, among whom a mass of such ineffable nonsense as that which constitutes the German neology could have grown to any bulk, without bringing upon itself an overwhelming torrent of ridicule and reprobation. The schemes of theology which, from year to year, during more than half a century, have been gravely delivered from divinity chairs in Germany, would scarcely dare to ask a hearing in a debating club of London 'prentices, much less venture under the eye of our reviewers. —Infidelity like that of these *Lutheran ministers* never shows itself in *England* in a shape more creditable than that of two-penny tracts. Some laborious attempts have been made of late to establish distinctions, which, by excluding the grosser extravagancies of this school, may preserve all the substance of unbelief.—Such distinctions are worthy only of contempt. The subject admits of no *middle* proposition. Jesus Christ was crucified under Pontius Pilate;—and the third day he rose from the dead. This last affirmation is wholly true, or utterly false. Those who *deny* it are infidels, without distinction; and in calling themselves Christians, and in accepting salaries as Christian teachers, are guilty, both of hypocrisy and fraud. Those who *assent* to the fact, are obliged to own a *divine* authority in the doctrine taught by Christ and his Apostles—an authority paramount to all philosophical theories—unalterable, undecaying, and universal. For He who rose from the dead, “shall come again,” to judge mankind:—and He will judge them by the word He has given to the world.

Page 170, *.

Whenever it is affirmed that the higher morality and more correct modes of thinking which distinguish the New Testament writers were *new* to the world, an exception is of course understood in favour of the Hebrew Scriptures, for every Christian acknowledges the divine origination of those writings, and finds in them, every where, those two "great commandments" which comprise the whole duty of man. A comparison perfectly fair to the Apostles must lie between them and the doctors of their own nation and times. If we would estimate the *merits* of the writers of the New Testament, let their epistles be compared with the commentaries of the Rabbis—with the Misna, and the Gemaras. Nothing can be more equitable. If the one class of writers of *the same age and nation*, and possessing all the advantages of learning, abound with extravagancies, puerile conceits, trivial casuistries, frivolous superstitions, and immoral evasions of the ancient law; and if the other class of writers who, with one or two exceptions, were unlearned and simple men, have embodied, in a very small compass, a code of ethics to which succeeding nations have bowed, and which still commands the veneration of mankind—whence is the difference?

Page 182, *.

The distinction between the *teachers* and the *taught* was so well observed and respected in the synagogue-service, that one cannot readily suppose it to have been lost sight of in the Christian assemblies, which evidently followed the model of that established and well known form of worship. The Apostles, though charged with a message, infinitely momentous, to "all men," conformed themselves to the proprieties of established usages: it was not till after they had received, in the accustomed form, an invitation to address the congregation, that they delivered to the people the glad tidings of

salvation. Nor does it seem to have been till they were *expelled* from the synagogues by the violence and bigotry of the Jews, that they established *separate* congregations, in any city. If the Jews generally throughout the world had obeyed the Gospel, it may be doubted if any change in *ecclesiastical forms* would have taken place in the Christian community.

Page 212, *.

The poetry of one people is hardly to be made over to another, even by the most perfect translations. The same may be said of a people's absurdities:—they look better in the land of their birth than abroad. As the German poetry is *too German* for English ears, so is the German divinity: it needs not to be *refuted* among ourselves; let it only be *shewn*. But though there is no danger of the spread of German infidelity in England, as once there was of the spread of French infidelity, which was recommended by the graces of intelligence, there is reason to fear that a system not less subversive of all true piety is silently harboured in the breasts of a very large number of educated men in this country. It is never seen in books; for it would not bear deliberate analysis: it is but darkly hinted even in conversation, for it is too important to the tranquillity of those who hold it to be exposed to the imminent perils of argumentation. The substance of this system may be thus expressed. 'Christianity is a good thing, a very good thing, and, in truth, necessary to the well-being of nations and families. It is very proper for our servants; and very proper for our children; and highly desirable, in moderation, for our wives and daughters. By all means let them go to church, and believe the Bible. But for *ourselves*, we believe the Koran as much.' The holders of this opinion grant then that it is desirable that Christianity should be upheld and diffused among the people; and they readily admit that, for this purpose, it is fit and necessary that an order of

men should be maintained to teach it. Now what is to be the belief of these teachers? It were desirable, plainly, that they should be simple, zealous, and *honest* friends of the system they are to enforce: for how is it to be supposed that men who are at heart infidels should *successfully* teach a doctrine from which their reason revolts? 'How loathsome an employment! how degrading to be solemn liars by profession! But if this Christianity, which *must* be upheld and taught, is really so destitute of satisfactory evidence that *we wise and well informed men* spurn the idea of submitting to its authority, then what is to be done for the clergy? Do not they pursue the same studies as ourselves? Are not they gifted with as much natural shrewdness as ourselves? May they not read the same books, and join in the same conversations? How then can they—or the larger part of them, be rescued from that disbelief which we think inevitable? 'If I *must* be an infidel, why must not my younger brother, who is in the church, and who is not inferior to me in learning, or intelligence, or knowledge of the world?' And if so, what remains for him, but a life of wretched hypocrisy, to which the revenues of an empire could not reconcile a virtuous mind. As a practical matter then, *this* species of infidelity makes bare its own monstrous absurdity. It must be renounced, or it will lodge the plague of a deadly vice in the very heart of the social system.

Page 246, *.

The epistle to the Hebrews, though marked with all the peculiarities of Paul's style, is a composition very unlike his other letters. The high-wrought and even abstruse *forensic* reasoning with which it abounds indicates very plainly that it was primarily addressed to persons of education, and therefore above the lowest class. It contains also some allusions which may justify an inference to the same effect.—“Ye

have not resisted unto blood :”—the *extreme* means of persecution had not been employed against these Hebrews, but rather fines and confiscations :—“ Ye took joyfully *the spoiling of your goods.*”

Page 259, *.

The primary evidence relating to what Juvenal is pleased to call the ‘velification of Mount Athos,’ is that of Herodotus, which is given in the following terms :—“ As the first expedition had suffered loss in doubling Mount Athos, Xerxes provided against a like misfortune, by a work which he commenced three years before (his second expedition). He stationed a number of ships of war at Eleutes, a city of Chersonesus, from which were sent out men of all nations, drawn from the army, who dug—under the lash ;—one set of men being succeeded by another : the inhabitants also of the surrounding country were compelled to dig. The masters of the work were Bubares, son of Megabazus, and Artachæes, son of Artæus ;—both Persians. Athos is a great and celebrated mountain, stretching into the sea, and stocked with people. Where it joins the continent it forms a peninsular ; the isthmus being about twelve stades (little more than an English mile) in width. This part is an open level ; there being no considerable hills between the Acanthion Sea and that of Torone. . . . The digging was carried on in the following manner.—The barbarians stretched a line near the city Sana, and allotted the whole extent in parcels to the several nations employed. When the trench had reached some depth, the lowest set of workmen dug, while those next above them delivered the earth to others, stationed higher on the grade ; and these to others, till it reached the summit, where it was thrown out. To all, except the Phœnicians, it happened to perform their labour twice ; for making the trench as wide below as above, the sides frequently caved in. But the Phœnicians, as on other occasions,

so in this, exhibited their superior intelligence; for in executing that part of the work which fell to their lot, they made the width at the surface twice as much as was required. So that, as they proceeded, they continually diminished the width of their work, which, at the bottom, was the same as that dug by others. Near the spot was a field where they established a market, supplied with provisions from Asia. It is my opinion—deliberately formed—that the motive which impelled Xerxes to order this work, was a feeling of ostentation, and that he intended hereby, both to give a signal display of his power, and to leave a monument which should perpetuate his fame. For when, without labour (comparatively) he might have drawn his vessels over the isthmus, he caused this canal, through which the sea might flow, to be dug, of such width that two galleys could work their oars in it abreast.” Polymnia, 22—24. The next testimonies are those of the orators Lysias and Isocrates, contained in the quotations already given, pp. 75, 76. Though the style of these orations is far too declamatory to allow them great weight in a disputed matter of history, it is hard to imagine that their allusions to this fact could have been ventured and admitted if it had been without foundation. The evidence of Thucydides has also been already adduced, p. 261, and *alone* it might well be deemed conclusive. If the story had been contrived by the Greeks, merely to exaggerate their narrative of the war, the paltry fraud must have drawn upon itself the contempt of all intelligent men in the next age, and *then* nothing would have been easier than to ascertain the truth or falsehood of the story. Thucydides could not have been deceived on this point, he had often passed over the ground. Later writers affirm the fact without hesitation.—Diodorus Siculus says, “ Xerxes, dividing his forces at Sardis, sent a sufficient body to connect the Hellespont; and another to cut through the Chersonese of Mount Athos; both which works he performed, not only for the more safe and speedy passage of his army, but with the intention, as he hoped, of amazing the Athenians by the magnitude of these

undertakings. Those who were sent—by the conjoint efforts of so great a number of men—speedily accomplished their task.” Biblioth. b. ix. c. 2. Justin alludes only to these works, without expressly naming the places—“ He himself (Xerxes) always seen the first in the flight, and the last in the fight—in dangers, timid—when fear was removed, inflated. In confidence of his powers, before the trial of war, he seemed the lord even of nature;—levelling mountains, filling up valleys, covering some seas with bridges, and leading others, for the convenience of passage, by a shorter course.” b. i. c. 10. Juvenal seems to have set the fashion of treating this account as a fable.

Creditor olim
Velificatus Athos, et quidquid Græcia mendax
Audet in historia: constratum classibus isdem,
Subpositumque rotis solidum mare

Sat. X.

This scepticism once uttered, who should dare to believe? It has been almost a matter of course—till of late—to jest upon the trench of Xerxes. Richardson, page 311, thinks the story utterly incredible:—not so later writers. “ Scarcely any circumstance of the expedition of Xerxes is more strongly supported by historical testimony than the making the canal of Athos. The informed and exact Thucydides, who had property in Thrace, lived part of his time upon that property, and held, at one time, an important command there, speaks of the canal of Athos made by the king of Persia with perfect confidence. Plato, Isocrates, and Lysias, all mention it as an undoubted fact; the latter adding that it was in his time still a subject of wonder, and of common conversation. Diodorus relates the fact not less confidently than Herodotus. That part of Strabo which described Thrace is unfortunately lost. But the canal of Xerxes remains confidently mentioned in the epitome. The place was moreover so surrounded with Grecian settlements that it seems impossible for such a report, if unfounded, to have held any credit. At the very time of the expedition of Xerxes, there

were no fewer than five Grecian towns on the peninsular itself of Athos, one even on the isthmus, situate, as Thucydides particularly mentions, close to the canal, and many on the adjacent coasts. Yet Juvenal has chosen the story of this canal for an exemplification of the Grecian disposition to lie; and a traveller who two centuries ago visited, or thought he visited the place, has asserted that he could find no vestiges of the work. For myself I must own that I cannot consider the sarcasm of a satirist, wanting to say a smart thing, or such a negative evidence as that of the modern traveller, of any weight against the concurring testimonies of the writers above quoted." Mitford's *Greece*, vol. ii. p. 111. "The digging of the canal of Athos is supported by the uniform testimony of all antiquity, and might be credited on the single testimony of Thucydides, the most faithful, accurate, and impartial of all historians, ancient or modern, and who himself lived long in the neighbourhood of Athos, where he had an estate, and was director of the Athenian mines in Thrace." Gillies' *Greece*, chap. ix. Note. See also Rennell, sect. vi. The *fact* itself is of extremely small importance; but the *principle* of historical inquiry upon which the question is argued is of the highest consequence. The sceptics, in this instance, say not a word in explanation of the difficulty created by denying so much unexceptionable testimony:—they write as if no such testimony existed, or as if they had never heard of it.—If, with the most judicious modern writers, we think the fact amply attested, then what becomes of the doctrine, that the best evidence may be set at nought, as often as it affirms what may at first hearing seem improbable? The question between the infidel and the Christian is at issue upon this principle.

ERRATUM.

Page 8, line 22, for "alledged," read "alleged."

